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This month's highlight: tucking into an Irish stew and a pint of Guinness over lunch with Sting and Shaggy.

Shame's singer gets it off his chest (p32); (right, inset) the tricky birth of Massive Attack's Mezzanine revisited (p74); (below) Frank Turner, down Mexico way (p80).



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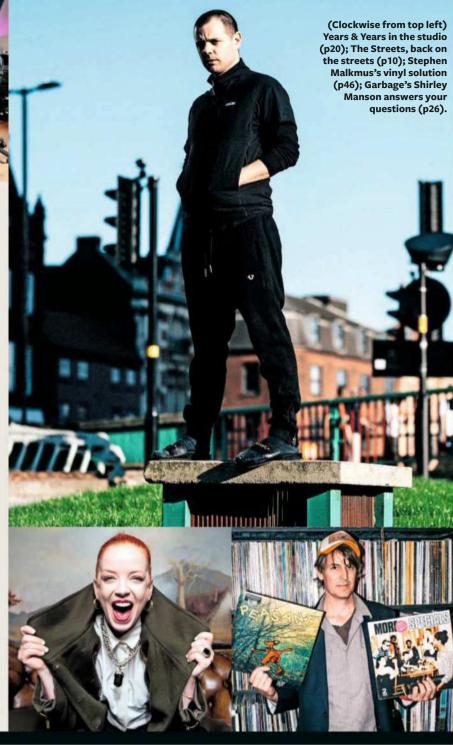
With a selection that includes Foreigner and The Specials, no one could accuse the ex-Pavement man of narrow-mindedness.

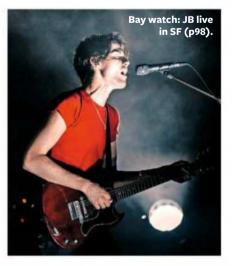
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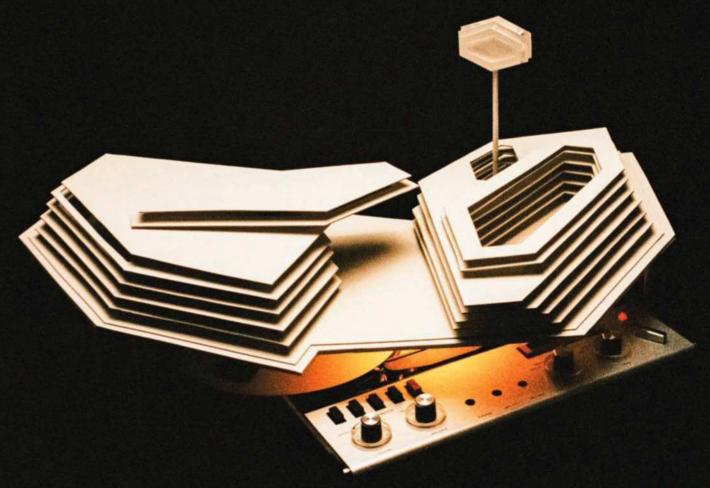
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The ultimate outsiders' first three albums reissued in all their post-punk glory.



FRETIC MONKEYS TRANQUILITY BASE HOTEL + CASINO 11.05.18





Backstage



"After a 10-hour flight to Bangalore and an hour-long taxi ride to the hotel, I checked in at 6am, then walked straight back out into 40-degree heat to scout for locations for a shoot that was due to start five hours later. It was sensory overload. Poverty, wealth, stray dogs and commerce everywhere. Ultimately you have to strip all of that out of your mind and suss out how to photograph your band in the midst of all this, to have it all make sense and do justice to both the story of Wolf Alice and the people who live here that are staring at you eyeing up their shop front, their street or home as a possible magazine cover. You have to do it right. The shot above was taken at the band's show in Bangalore. Everything builds to the gig. The travel, the hotels, the airports and the endless waiting. And in a moment, it's over. Two days later I was driving up the M6 to shoot the second half of the feature in Manchester, everyone jet-lagged but smiling. In a mirror of recent days, we walk the city's streets, sit backstage and then showtime. I was gutted when it was all over."

ALEX LAKE, Q CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER

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[...And their favourite Arctic Monkeys song...]

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NEW ADVENTURES IN MUSIC...

In which we welcome back The Streets, drop Johnny Marr a line and join Years & Years to hear their long-awaited new LP.

8/9/1989-20/4/2018

Hugely influential DJ and producer Avicii was found dead last month aged just 28. Michael Cragg looks back on an artist who shaped the landscape of dance and pop music.

n Saturday, 21 April, tens of thousands of young Swedes crowded into Stockholm city centre to listen to their countryman Avicii's uplifting brand of sweetly melodic EDM. His 2011 breakout hit Levels - which fuses buoyant house riffs with a sample of Etta James's Something's Got A Hold On Me - played back to back with 2013's equally massive, genre-splicing Wake Me Up. This, however, wasn't a DJ set, but rather an impromptu memorial, coming a day after the hugely successful producer/DJ, born Tim Bergling, was found dead in Oman, aged just 28. On 26 April his family released a statement which included the line: "He could not go on any longer. He wanted to find peace."

Inspired by the likes of Daft Punk and Swedish House Mafia, Bergling first started making music at 16, quickly knocking out slick, pop-focused dance hits that would go on to soundtrack the burgeoning EDM scene in America. House anthems such as Levels and I Could Be The One became escapist balm for millennials now flocking to gargantuan dance festivals such as Miami's Ultra to experience a sense of catharsis at odds with the global struggles their generation were born into. One recent obituary referred to Bergling's music as "a sonic antidepressant for listeners around the world".

While Levels' stop-start dynamic and delicate riff was copied ad infinitum, the creatively restless Bergling switched styles, perplexing the crowd at Ultra in 2013 when he brought out soul singer Aloe Blacc, as well as a live band complete with banjo and kazoo, to debut country and bluegrass-inspired

banger, Wake Me Up. Following the negative reaction, the mild-mannered Bergling posted a statement on Facebook: "My music is open to anyone who wants to listen to it... Love you all who listen with open hearts and open minds." Wake Me Up went on to sell over 11 million copies, its hybrid sound influencing everyone from fellow EDM DJ Zedd to Kylie Minogue's recent country-dance makeover.

Collaborations with the likes of Madonna, Coldplay and even ABBA's Benny and Björn followed, but in 2016 Bergling retired from performing live, citing health concerns. His social media shifted from pictures of clubs to idyllic holiday snaps, but he soon returned to his first love of music with last summer's Avīci (01) EP. It was billed as the first part of a three-EP series culminating in an album, but now acts as a tragic swansong for a pioneer who helped shape the sound of both dance and pop music.









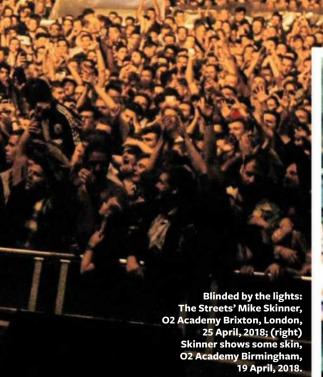
First Look

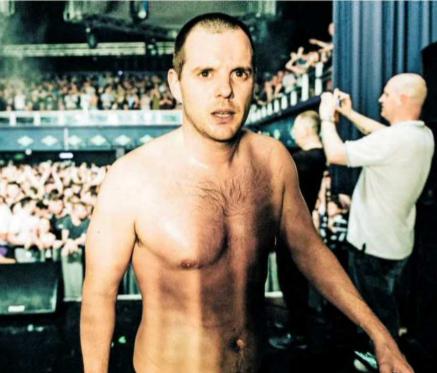
A BANG

Mike Skinner's return burns up the UK.

t the first of three sold-out shows at London's O2 Academy Brixton, Mike Skinner can be heard before he is seen, the first lines of

Turn The Page bouncing across the stage just ahead of his tense black-clad frame. It's an old trick in the making-an-entrance playbook – the star gracing a fully-primed band and audience with their presence but it feels oddly understated, as if the hyper-verbal force behind The Streets has just come back in from fetching a beer from the kitchen, the conversation he started 16 years ago with debut album Original Pirate Material, just carrying on, uninterrupted, unbroken. Where were we?









It makes sense: Skinner has always been a storyteller, and seven years after he ended The Streets with fifth album Computers And Blues amid stories of burnout and illness, fatherhood and the desire to turn to film-making - he has picked up the narrative thread again. These Brixton shows cap off a fevered, sold-out UK tour, Skinner the returning pop star still making sense of the world. "Can you see me, Brixton?" he asks, shaved head and ethereal pallor making him look as if he's starring in an experimental Hamlet. "Can you hear me?" There's a roar, and the front rows catch him as he falls into their arms.

is return to The Streets' handle isn't without risk. The cultural landscape has shifted tectonically since his groundbreaking first two

records: 2004's day-in-the-life A Grand Don't Come For Free featured mobile phones, but it was a Web 1.0 world, where returning a rental DVD was still a thing. Music's not where he left it, either: UK garage inspired him (he sprays a bottle of champagne over the audience, an apparent tribute to the scene's luxe swagger), but since then grime, its once underground offshoot, has set up a mainstream HQ and drill is the new exciting moral panic in town. For a man whose songs so often felt like a live-brain-feed from the sofa and cash point, chip shop and club nostalgia could be fatal.

It would be stupid to claim that it is absent tonight - the beer-chucking jubilation greeting the rowdy bounce of Don't Mug Yourself or Fit But You Know It suggests





(From top) Skinner meets and greets his public; his Instagram post proclaiming a new beer-drinking record for Brixton Academy.



hundreds of wasted youths being reclaimed. Yet despite its distinctive time and place, Skinner's music offered an Ordnance Survey map for young adult ennui: small betrayals and morning-after dramas, little conflicts and glitches masking an existential dread so huge and formless it's impossible to see around it. That never goes out of style.

The encore signposts new directions, pushing forwards, not looking back, as Skinner showcases new material, some





The guitar icon and rubbish drummer checks in after pulling an all-nighter.

ello, Johnny. Where are you right now?

I'm in the Crazy Face Factory studios just on the outskirts of

Manchester. It's between Manchester and the Pennines. It's on the top floor of an old factory from the Industrial Revolution and it is what it sounds like, it's very industrial and very Northern.

What have you been up to today?

I've been recording the B-side of the first single from Call The Comet, the new record. I've been on the night shift so I'm about to go home and get some sleep. I came in here yesterday about seven o'clock in the evening and I've been working through the night on this new song.

Is that your usual recording routine?

It is. I thought I'd got out of this nocturnal activity many years ago but making this record I've found myself back in it for most of the album, which isn't so bad, cos it's been a pretty hellish winter from what I'm told.

Call The Comet is your 18th studio album.

Are you ever about to start a record and think, "Oh, I can't be arsed..."?

That might happen one day! But I was particularly eager to do this one because I'd written the book /Marr's memoir Set The Boy Free came out in 20167 and that took up a year. However enjoyable the challenge was, that really got me raring to go to make a record again. Eighteen albums, Jesus, that's scary.

How long can you take off from music before you get that itch?

I can't remember ever doing it. Bernard Sumner used to make me stop talking about or listening to music. He'd get in a real sulk about it. It seemed like an eternity to me but he said it was like three days or something. We used to have musical amnesties.

You were 45 when you got your first tattoo. What prompted it?

The honest answer is I was so inspired by Aldous Huxley's description of the Dancing Shiva symbol as being the ultimate depiction of life that I was moved to get that tattoo. The other thing was, I was in a band / Modest Mouse 7 who were really big on tattoos and I wanted to make a commitment to the band and the audience. Typically and predictably, I got on a roll and then couldn't stop. I've probably got 10 or 11 now.

"Bernard Sumner used to make me stop talking about or listening to music. We used to have musical amnesties."

Have you read the article online titled "The Body As A Canvas: The Art & Symbolism Of Johnny Marr's Tattoos"?

No! Is that a real thing?

Yeah, it's on a Johnny Marr fansite called Dynamic.

Oh, those guys are amazing. Not only do they know more about what I'm doing than I do but they understand it more than I do.

You're renowned as one of the world's best guitarists. What are you rubbish at?

Dead easy. The drums. I'm hopeless. I think I've only ever sat behind a drumkit maybe three times in my entire life and from the very first moment I realised how off it looked. It would be like, no offence, but I've got a feeling Elton John would look pretty weird with a guitar or a bass. Can you imagine it? It's that weird. Even worse.

Maybe you should put together a supergroup of famous artists all playing an instrument they're rubbish at?

That's completely the opposite of a supergroup! Like just the opposite of, say, Cream? Whatever the opposite of Cream would be. Just off-Cream. Cheese, basically.

What will you be doing 20 minutes from now?

I'll be calling my mate to get him to give me a lift. Again. Because although I'm supposed to be driving myself home, I've done that thing where I've stayed up way too long. I'll bounce around the house for a few hours until someone tells me to go to bed.

Good luck resetting your body clock. Bye, Johnny!

See ya man, bye! NIALL DOHERTY

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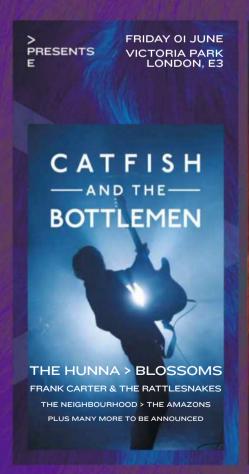
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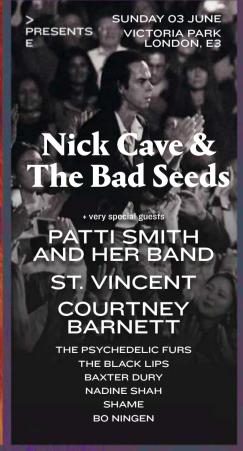
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PLUS MORE TO BE ANNOUNCED



















Oysters and Guinness in West London with the pair behind the bromance of 2018.

lunchtime at the end of March, Sting and Shaggy stroll to the back of The Cow, a gastropub in West London, and take a seat in the corner. Sting, tall and thin with a healthy, wealthy glow and the hushed tone of a wildlife documentary narrator, takes off his scarf and looks at the menu on the table in front of him. Shaggy, his new best mate, looks up towards the waitress coming over to take a drinks order. "Little bit of a wet day today, y'know, but you're sunshine in the middle of the wetness," he says in his soft Jamaican lilt. He lets out an infectious cackle and asks for a mint tea. Sting orders half a Guinness and a dozen oysters to share. "I'm too cold for a Guinness right now," says Shaggy. He'll warm up over the next hour.

n a rainy Wednesday

The pair's unlikely union is one of the happier tales of 2018. There is something brilliantly odd about this coming together of the serious MOR superstar and reggae-pop's Mr Lover Lover. Their collaborative album, 44/876, came out last month. "Because it's so dark at the moment, people need a smile," says Sting. "I think the unlikeliness of this combination intrigues people."

What was supposed to be one track turned into a full-blown record when the duo hit it off. "We'd known each other in the business but never really hung out hung out,

y'know? And now we're inseparable!" says Shaggy. He lets out another of his remarkable laughs, a long, panting giggle that is funnier than most people's best jokes.

Sting orders the fish stew, and another Guinness, so Shaggy goes for the fish stew and a Guinness too. I opt for the Irish stew, and the obligatory Guinness. Shaggy didn't expect for them to have so much in common.

the album in New York, they would walk from Sting's house to the studio and talk about Shaggy's experiences in the US Marines, Donald Trump and "all kinds of shit." They say that even though 44/876 is a happy record, it deals with some serious subjects. "We feel we're entertainers first and teachers second," says Sting, who was an English teacher for three years before he was an entertainer.

The oysters arrive. "This has my name on it," says Sting, tucking in. "That's a lot of goo to put in your mouth though," says Shaggy. When Shaggy went to the former Police frontman's place for a full English before recording one morning, he was astounded by how much brown sauce Sting put on his breakfast. "Don't tell him that!" says Sting. "I'm supposed to be sophisticated!" "He had it on everything," says Shaggy.

A waiter brings over some complimentary snails, whelks and winkles. "This is the type of shit he brings me to," says Shaggy, evaluating the tray in front of him. The other night Sting took him to a fancy brasserie in Paris. "We're in this posh restaurant... and this is what we're served," he says, pulling up a shot on his iPhone of a tin of sardines on a plate. "Vintage sardines!" protests Sting.

As Shaggy is talking about what he's learned from Sting, a waitress puts his fish stew down in front of him. "I learned how to pay real attention to the instrum... what is this thing on top, Sting?" he says, looking warily into the bowl. Sting tells him it's a piece of bread with sauce on it. "It's spicy and it's great," says Sting. "Yeah?" says Shaggy. "Yeah," says Sting. Shaggy eats the bread. He likes it.

Lunch finished, they speak about the joint birthday party they're planning in October. What will you get each other? "I don't need anything," says Sting, calmly, "and Shaggy doesn't need much." He looks confident in his answer, until Shaggy pipes up. "You know

"The collective name for us is 'Shagging'. Which isn't inappropriate." Sting

Both their wives work in film and they're both Libras, he says. "We both have ridiculous names, which is helpful," says Sting. "The collective name for us now is 'Shagging'. Which isn't inappropriate."

More common ground can be found in the fact that before they became famous, both had careers in other industries. Recording

what I want," says the Jamaican. "I want one of those hands-free toilets that you have in your house. It just opens up and washes your ass, and it has a warm seat. I think I'll get one of those." Sting exhales slowly. "OK... Happy birthday." And then Shaggy lets out one of his gale force laughs again, a little bit of sunshine in the middle of the rain. NIALL DOHERTY



Culinary speciality?

Sting: "I can make a pretty good liver and bacon casserole. It's something I used to make as a student."

Death Row dinner?

Shaggy: "Curry goat and white rice."

Favourite condiment?

Sting: "HP Sauce."

Favourite restaurant?

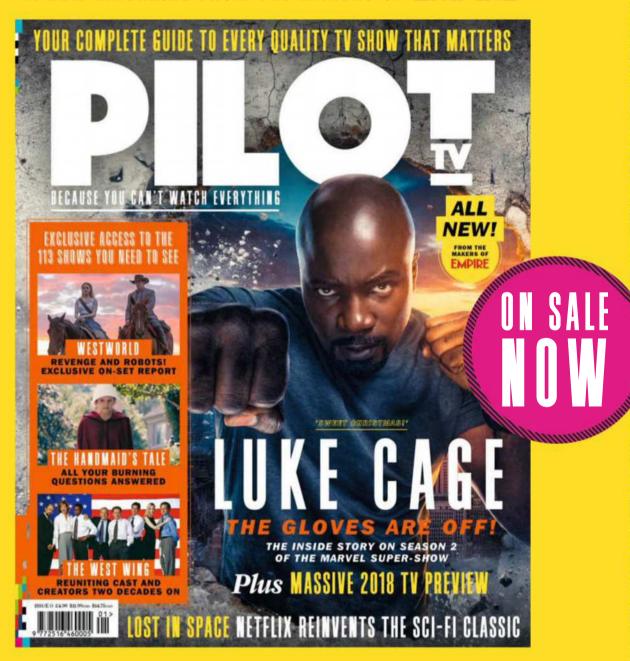
Shaggy: "There's a place called Bryant & Cooper in Long Island. It's an amazing steakhouse."

Most hated footstuff?

Sting: "I never understand popcorn. I've no idea why people would want to eat buckets of that shit. It just tastes like Cornflakes to me."



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PILOT BECAUSE YOU CAN'T WATCH EVERYTHING



Breaking

Caustic punk rock with a flourish of wit and sensitivity.

'm just a really simple man," says Idles vocalist Joe Talbot, before smartly pontificating on everything from Tory cuts to author Margaret Atwood and

the poetic leanings of Muhammad Ali. It's not only his conversation that puts paid to the claim. As a band, Idles make blistering guitar music that offsets its fury with wit, intelligence and sensitivity.

Despite having only released their debut album, Brutalism, last year, Idles formed back in 2009, shortly after Talbot and bassist Adam Devonshire began running a club night together. They were soon joined by drummer Jon Beavis and guitarists Mark Bowen and Lee Kiernan, but despite putting out two EPs of caustic punk didn't venture much outside their Bristol DIY scene bubble until a couple of years ago.

Backstage at London's Heaven, where the group are wrapping up their sold-out UK tour, the 33-year-old singer is totting up the perks of late-onset success. "One, we appreciate it more," he says between puffs on a vape. "Two, we got to make loads of mistakes and not be criticised in a crippling way." Thirdly, Talbot points to his earlier hedonistic

lifestyle, "I wouldn't have toured well when I was 24 because I was massively into stuff that would've probably killed me."

Like a post-hardcore Billy Childish, Talbot howls his way through a series of stark, seething statements over clanking guitars

For Fans Of: **Sleaford Mods,** Slaves, Iceage **Get This Track:** Mother



toured well when I was 24 because I was into stuff that would have probably killed me." Joe Talbot

and pummelling drums on Brutalism.
The album is heavy in more ways than one:
on it, Idles tackle subjects including misogyny,
depression and grief. For Brutalism's
follow-up, out later this year, the band will
be adding the problems of toxic masculinity –
or, as Talbot puts it, "a trope of crap that
you teach yourself" – to that list.

Another topic they're keen to talk about is Brexit. Talbot believes that Exeter, a song that connects the tedium of his hometown with the senseless violence of its inhabitants, has struck a particular chord with fans. "Coventry, Blackpool, there's fuck-all to do there. The people who came to our shows from those places are at a point of frustration," he says. "They want something new, ie, Brexit." Talbot says he cried about the referendum result. but due to the band's growing fanbase in those areas now feels like a "mouthpiece of a group of people that are marginalised", something that's made him less combative and more understanding when it comes to politics. "Now I'm on a bigger platform, I cannot encourage people to be like, 'Fuck you, you're racist.' Just because their beliefs may seem racist, doesn't mean they are innately hateful towards that race, it just means they're terrified, they're poor and they want change."

Onstage that evening at London's Heaven, Talbot is keeping his principles at the forefront of the jubilantly sweaty punters' minds, speaking about the positives of immigration and dedicating a song to the NHS as the band roar through their debut. Throughout, Idles create an atmosphere that combines incandescent punk rage with a real sense of compassion – even Talbot would have to agree, doing that is far from simple. RACHEL AROESTI



THE TUNES ON REPEAT IN THE Q OFFICE THIS MONTH.

LET'S EAT GRANDMA COOL & COLLECTED

The centrepiece of the Norwich duo's brilliant forthcoming second LP takes in stark balladry, ominous piano motifs and soaring indie-rock over its nine minutes.

Out: 29 June, on Transgressive.

ARP FIJI

The highlight from New York-based DJ/producer Alexis Georgopoulos's forthcoming album is a luminous kosmische groover, ever-so-gently spiced with liquid synths and dubby effects.

Out: 22 June, on Mexican Summer.

BEN HOWARD NICA LIBRES AT DUSK

The Devon singersongwriter continues his move away from Mumfords-style thumpy folk with his delicate third album. This soporific opener beautifully sets the tone. **Out:** 1 June, on Island.

GHOST FAITH

The new record from the histrionic Swedish metallers is a concept album about death and doom, but a lot more fun than that sounds. This sludge-rock anthem is one of its best tracks.

Out: 1 June, on Loma

Vista Recordings.

FLAME 1 FOG

True to its title, this team-up between shadowy dubstepper Burial and digital dancehall don The Bug is an all-enveloping slab of bass-heavy scuzziness.

Out: now. on Pressure.

Let's Eat Grandma:

"soaring indie-rock" a speciality.

<mark>MAZZY STAR</mark> QUIET, THE WINTER HARBOUR

From Beach House to Cigarettes After Sex, Mazzy Star's sleepyeyed influence still hangs over any act who want to do mournful and shimmering. Quiet, The Winter Harbour (from the new Still EP), with its sad pianos, aching slide guitar and Hope Sandoval's inimitable vocals, reminds you who did it first and best. Out: 1 June, via Rhymes Of An Hour.

ARCTIC MONKEYS FOUR OUT OF FIVE

The highlight of the quartet's strange and wonderful sixth record, Alex Turner perfects his vision of their new freewheeling sound on this cosmic-pop gem.

Out: now, on Domino.

AMEN DUNES BLUE ROSE

Damon McMahon, the brains behind Brooklynbased one-man-band Amen Dunes, has hit a career-peak with fifth album Freedom. Blue Rose is psychedelic folk-rock that sounds like an inverse of The War On Drugs' widescreen sound. **Out:** now, on Sacred Bones.

ONEOHTRIX POINT NEVER BLACK SNOW

Daniel Lopatin's matrix of cut-up loops and labyrinthine sampling reaches new levels of uneasy listening on the forthcoming Age Of. The hypnotic synth glow of this first single offers some respite.

Out: 1 June, on Warp.

BRIAN JONESTOWN MASSACRE HOLD THAT THOUGHT

This year, Brian
Jonestown Massacre
head honcho Anton
Newcombe is releasing
not one, but two BJM
albums. Hold That
Thought is from the first
(below), its clattering
desert rock still
approximating an
imagined past where
The Rolling Stones
hung out with The Jesus
And Mary Chain.
Out: 1 June,

via A Recordings.

In The Studio

RS & YEARS K INTO E FUTURE

Frontman Olly Alexander takes control on the trio's conceptual follow-up to their platinum-selling debut.

Years' second album has a concept. "I wanted to create this society that's maybe in the future, or a parallel universe," says singer Olly Alexander, calling O amid "a whole cocktail of emotions" on the day that the new record, titled Palo Santo, is being mastered. "It's populated primarily by androids, and the few humans that remain are performers in cabaret shows - they're hugely famous because the androids are obsessed with them."

on't run away, but Years &

Textbook second album stuff: an allegory of fame and almost certainly a kind of safety blanket wrapped tightly around the shoulders of 27-year-old Alexander, who became famous in the aftermath of the trio's 2015 banging debut album Communion while his bandmates Emre Türkmen and Mikey Goldsworthy remained happily anonymous. "Oh totally, that's definitely a part of it," he confesses, laughing.

Alexander's stature was sealed not only as a result of Communion's success, but also via his work - BBC3 documentaries, speeches at Stonewall events - on mental health, particularly in LGBTQ communities. Being there for fans while managing his own depression is a careful balancing act - hence the thin veil. "I wanted to create this fantasy. this glamour and magic around this album," he explains. "It's also a way of separating 'Olly from Years & Years' from Olly, myself. It's helpful for me to create some distance between those things."

That said, absolutely nothing about the six songs from Palo Santo that Q hears are a wallflower's work: less chirpy dance-pop than Communion, more the sainted middle ground between Perfume Genius and the Pet Shop Boys. The themes fit that divine queer lineage, too. Palo Santo is more sexually explicit than Communion thanks to Alexander's increased confidence: Hallelujah evokes the Bobby O cuts that first inspired





Lowe, and the stately Sanctify subverts religious imagery to assess the straight boys who seek nocturnal refuge with Alexander.

Shame, danger, salvation and intoxication intermingle on these songs, providing a welcome tonic to a "your fave is problematic" culture that often insists on moral purity. "I've always been really fascinated with the tension between wanting to be 'good' and 'bad' and what those things mean," says Alexander. "And when we're in a relationship,



what do we owe each other? Those moralistic ideas are fun to unpack."

Other songs grapple with Alexander's own past. "Tired of erasing my history," he sings on Karma - but suggests that "history can change" on DNA, a song with lyrics about "the two-tone flash of the alarm", and a lifechanging moment where "the big boys beat it out of you" that could suggest a hate crime. "It's something that happened to me when I was younger," he says quietly. "I was surprised to sing about it, so I don't really know how to talk about it. When I was

me telling my story about my identity."

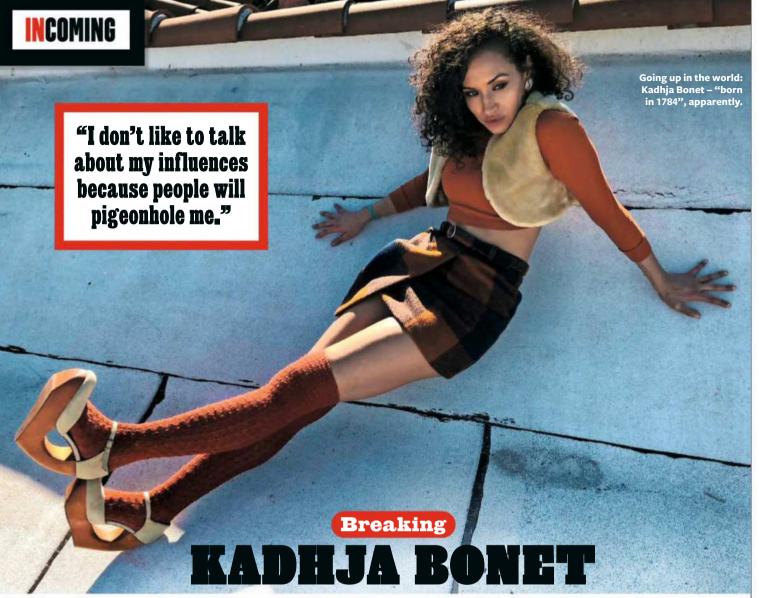
Olly Alexander

younger, I went through a really dark time cutting myself, wanting to run away - and that was me thinking back to then."

These raw themes have made Alexander the de facto face of Years & Years - he was always the obvious star, but Türkmen

and Goldsworthy have taken a step back on Palo Santo. "Everything was getting tied up with this concept that I wanted to produce visually about the message of Years & Years, and I really wanted that to be me telling my story about my identity," says Alexander. "They agreed to let that happen and I've been very grateful for their support. If it's a complete failure, then it'll all be my fault."

In that context – and given the majestic nature of what Q's heard so far - it's hard to be rudge him the sci-fi window dressing. LAURA SNAPES



Cosmic soul singer crash-lands on earth with gorgeous new album.

hen Kadhja Bonet first emerged in 2016, she was something of an enigma. The singer's Bandcamp page claimed she was "born in 1784 in the backseat of a sea-foam green space pinto" and that her music was the product of "travelling at maximum velocity through intergalactic jungle quadrants."

Unlikely as those statements sounded, there was something about the captivating music posted alongside them that combined the past with the otherworldly. With Bonet's gossamer voice gliding through an ethereal miasma of orchestral '70s soul, jazz, folk and R&B, it was like tuning into a celestial latenight radio show playing a mix of Minnie Riperton, Aaliyah and David Axelrod.

"I don't like to talk about my influences," says Bonet today, "because then people will try to pigeonhole me."

Good luck to anyone who would try, yet the person behind the intrigue does come into view on Bonet's superb new album, Childqueen. Out next month, it crystallises her sound into a

set of opulent, retro-futuristic soul with lyrics grounded in decidedly earthly matters. Tracks such as the glittering funk of lead single Mother Maybe creatively explore Bonet's own femininity and racial identity.

"It just dawned on me how fucking weird it is that we can grow a person inside of us," she ponders about the song. "I can only really share what my experience has been. And my personal experience has been of a woman of colour, and trying to gently suggest some of the confinements I've been trying to defy."

Shy and softly-spoken, Bonet is prone to a bit of deep thinking. The album's title came from a period of meditating on the enviable free-spiritedness enjoyed by children.

"The term is a mantra of mine," she says. "Something I use to remind myself to return to my safe place where I feel wholly myself."

Despite Childqueen's self-assuredness,

it was born out of a period of intense personal doubt for Bonet. "I was going through an existential crisis," she recalls. "To be honest, it's something I still feel every day - feeling unsure that there's anything

special enough about me to warrant my existence, in this weird, really dark way."

It's a concern that anyone who has heard her music would dispute. Growing up in San Francisco, Bonet was classically trained in violin and viola from a young age. Feeling the need to break away from the constraints of playing other people's music, she learned to play guitar and began writing her own songs, putting out her debut EP, The Visitor, in 2016. Fleshed out by a few more tracks to form the basis of her debut LP of the same name, its mesmeric qualities caught the ear of Grammynominated rapper Anderson .Paak, who is releasing Childqueen on his own OBE label.

Yet for all the acclaim she had received, when recording the follow-up, on which she plays and produced nearly everything herself, she was plagued with self-doubt.

"Making a record for someone as insecure as me can be debilitating," she says, coming up with a colourful analogy. "There comes a point when you're milking the cow when you're like, 'I'm not sure if this is milk or pus..."

Listening back to the wondrous results, it's clear Bonet really doesn't have anything to worry about. GEORGE GARNER

For Fans Of: SZA, Erykah Badu, **Curtis Mayfield Get This Track: Mother Maybe**





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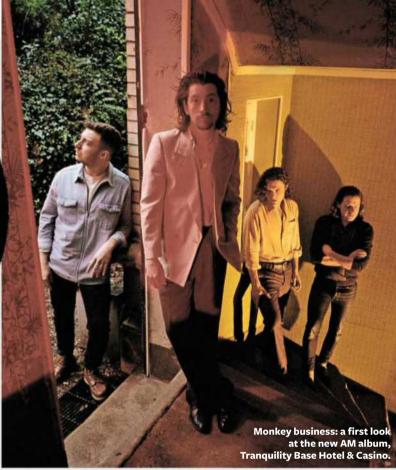
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Highlights from Q partners Absolute Radio this month include interviews with Peter Hook and Snow Patrol, plus a first look at the new Arctic Monkeys album.



NEW ARCTIC MONKEYS ALBUM PREVIEW

Absolute Radio, 14 May, 9pm It's the most eagerly awaited rock album of the year so far. Danielle Perry looks at what we can expect from the recently released new Arctic Monkeys long-player, the band's sixth, with its spaceage-sounding title Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino.

PETER HOOK IN CONVERSATION

Absolute Radio, 13 May, 9pm Since a rather acrimonious split with his New Order bandmates in 2007, low-slung bass legend Peter Hook has helped compile acid house collections, opened another club, published three books and re-recorded parts of the New Order/Joy Division back catalogue. Danielle Perry catches up with Hooky to talk about his latest touring plans and the Haçienda Classical shows.

NICKELBACK IN SESSION

Absolute Radio, 17 May, 9pm Formed in Alberta, Canada, back in the mid-'90s, covering Led Zeppelin and Metallica songs,

Nickelback have gone on to become one of the most successful rock bands of the 21st century. Hear them perform an exclusive Studio Session for Absolute Radio prize-winners and in conversation with presenter Leona Graham.

SNOW PATROL INTERVIEW

Absolute Radio, 27 May, 9pm Snow Patrol singer Gary Lightbody joins Dave Berry to talk about the trials and tribulations of completing really big jigsaws, having to mime for

videos and the long gestation of their seventh album, Wildness, which is reviewed on page 116.

THE DAVE BERRY **BREAKFAST SHOW**

Absolute Radio, 4 June, 6-10am It's the start of a new era at Absolute Radio as Dave Berry takes over the Breakfast Show. Joining him for his first show will be a very special guest. And, of course, co-host Matt Dyson. Plus there's a chance to win your way to the Isle Of Wight Festival as part of Ten Weeks Of Tickets.

This month Sunday Night Music Club host Danielle Perry has mostly been listening to...

Arcade Fire graced our shores last month with their knockout Infinite Content tour, which swept up and down the country like a tornado of confetti and sparkle. I legged it up to Wembley to interview Win Butler (pictured below) backstage ahead of their first show at the SSE Wemblev Arena. and though I'm not

usually a fan of big arena shows, I knew that if anyone could pull it off, it'd be these Canadian art-rockers.

Starting with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band – an outstanding troupe of musicians and masters of their craft - set the tone for the spectacular show which was to follow. Before then, I wandered backstage to meet Win. The place

was a hive of activity, Arcade Fire's crew buzzing around with big smiles on their faces while also exuding an air of calm professionalism.

By showtime at 8.45pm, with the arena full to bursting, heavy drums and flashing lights signalled the arrival of the band into 'the ring'. Arcade Fire then set about rewriting the

a Win Win situation:

arena-rock rule book by constantly stretching the possibilities of live performance, yet still retaining that allimportant inclusive, intimate experience. It's a fine line, but they absolutely nailed it.

■ Watch the video of Danielle chatting to Win Butler on Absolute Radio's YouTube channel, Listen to The Sunday Night Music Club from 8pm.



f you're looking for nervewracking tension in 2018, look no further than the upcoming Sky Cinema original film Anon.

In this brand new crime thriller, Clive Owen (Closer) and Amanda Seyfried (Les Misérables) navigate a future where all aspects of human life are subject to 24/7 surveillance, and yet a string of murders has failed to produce any suspects.

From 11 May, you can enjoy Anon in cinemas or the comfort of your own home with Sky Cinema. A premium subscription service boasting a brand new premiere every day* and over 1000 films to watch on demand in stunning HD - including Psycho, Vanilla Sky, Zodiac, Get Out, Nocturnal Animals, John Wick and The Usual Suspects – it is the ultimate cinematic experience. The only hard part is choosing which film to lose yourself in first.







YOU KNOW THE SCORE...

The greatest film scores and soundtracks are much more than musical decoration: they are as important, unforgettable and irreplaceable as any character. Never more so is this true than in the thriller genre. Whether it's Cameron Crowe establishing the vivid tone of Vanilla Sky with Radiohead's Kid A classic Everything In Its Right Place, or the stabbing strings of Bernard Herrmann's Psycho score supercharging the abject terror of Alfred Hitchcock's masterpiece, music is central to the thriller experience.

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Anon is in cinemas and on Sky Cinema from 11 May 2018.



Cash For Questions THIS MONTE: Shirley Manson

WORDS NIALL DOHERTY PHOTOGRAPHS SIMON SARIN

The Garbage frontwoman on what Marilyn Manson smells like, what she wears to put the bins out and the power of a "mad brain".



ifficult second album syndrome passed Garbage by when it came to making Version 2.0. The 1998 album became just as successful as their multi-million-

selling debut, making the quartet one of the biggest bands in the world. Revisiting the record for its remastered 20th-anniversary edition has brought back nothing but happy memories for frontwoman Shirley Manson.

"I'm not really somebody who listens to my music once it's done, I don't go back," she says, "so it was quite surreal. It was such a great record for us. I've got nothing but great memories of it. We were on the crest of a wave. There's always a struggle when you've got four egos in a room but in general it was a pretty joyous experience."

Manson is sitting in a cosy meeting room at her publicist's office in West London. The Edinburgh native is fun and animated company, with a filthy mouth and an infectious laugh. There have been bumps along the way for Garbage, with the band taking an extended hiatus in the mid-noughties before galvanising themselves for a second wave of success over the past few years. "I'm still alive, what a fucking miracle!" she proclaims. What better way to celebrate the continued existence of one of rock's most captivating

performers than with a public crossexamination? Let the questions begin...

What's the biggest career mistake you've ever made?

Felix Turner, London

Allowing myself to be told by our record company to make a video that I knew would be shite, which was for /2001 single / Cherry Lips. We had an incredible pitch from /British director / Dawn Shadforth who had made our Special video and she had this brilliant idea and we wanted

"I liked their facial hair!" Manson with Garbage bandmates (from left, Steve Marker, Butch Vig, Duke Erikson) in 1998.

to go with her but our American label wanted us to work with another director who made a terrible video. We had no choice. It'll never happen again.

What's the most trouble you got into as a youngster?

Emily Gray, Worthing

I was always too wily to get into trouble. But I did something awful at school, which I'm yet to forgive myself for, which is I spat on the headmaster from above, from three levels up. His name was Mr Scobie. I dropped saliva on him, I didn't spit on him. We were doing saliva bubbles where you would drop your gob and then suck it back up, and my gob did not get sucked up in time and it dropped on the headmaster and I immediately jumped back and he looked up and he saw another, slower girl and she got the blame for it. I allowed her to take the blame and I'll never forgive myself. She didn't know who'd done it. I was like lightning. She was helpless and caught in a web of deceit. I convinced myself psychologically that I hadn't done it. That's when I realised the power of the mad brain.

What's the weirdest thing you've seen from the stage?

Cam Simpson, Upminster

Probably last year when we were on tour in America. It was an outside show in Chicago and there was a man on a sun-lounger fast asleep throughout the whole show until I drew attention to him and the crowd

> started laughing at him. He woke up for one brief second then sat up and looked around a little dazed, and then went back to sleep. I took it on the chin.

Do you feel that your original burst of fame in the '90s with Garbage was tainted by two of your bandmates sporting criminal facial hair?

Jim Dunne, Bangor

I liked their facial hair! I thought it was cute, but I think my band are cute. /Q demonstrates the landing strip-style goatee that guitarist Duke Erikson sported and asks if she really thought it was cute 7 Hahahaarghhh! I liked it! The thing that people forget is that you just do the best you can when you emerge into the spotlight. There's the odd person who's just cool as fuck, and there's hardly any of them. Most of us are just normal people who get thrust into the spotlight and you do the best you can to catch up. What I'm saying is, don't fuck with my boys!





Who's the nicest smelling celebrity you've ever met?

Vicky Rayner, Derby

I haven't registered body odour to be honest, usually I'm either too excited or engaged in the experience to notice what they smell like. Marilyn Manson smells really good. He's delicious. He sort of smells like my very first boyfriend. He smells of, like, good hair products. He's really smart, really funny, really sweet. He's clean.

Do you take your own bins out? **Tim Howell, York**

Fuck yeah! I'm a maniac about bins. I'm a maniac about recycling, I'm a neat freak, mild obsessive compulsive. I have to be covered to put the bins out. My genitals need to be covered, and my tits. And I need to have something on my feet. But I have been out there in all states of dress, some magnificent, and some really frightening and depressing looks. Sometimes I'll be doing it after a photo shoot or something and I've got my hair completely done, with make-up and nails and lovely clothes, and other times you're skirting in and out hoping nobody sees you.

You are a world famous, well-travelled rock star. What is the first thing that people around the globe think about Scottish people?

Gemma Lowe, Aberdeen

The Loch Ness Monster. [Glasgow venue]

Internationally renowned Scot, Nessie The Loch Ness Monster.

"Marilyn Manson smells really good. He's delicious. He smells of, like, good hair products."

Barrowlands comes up a lot, much to my pride and joy. The more I go all over the world, the more I realise how special Barrowlands is. There are certain spaces that are magic and that's one of them. It's so peculiar, you don't think that it'll ever come up in conversation but it's almost always the first thing out of musicians' mouths.

Have you ever made one of your own fans crv?

Sam Hudson, Carlisle

Yes, I think I have. I'm always telling people to fuck off. See, here's my thing: if you know somebody's a tiger, don't put your hand in the tiger's cage. It's a given. Now, I am known for having a bit of a temper. I'm known for being a little quick to the rise, so don't be surprised when you get a response when you write something cheeky. I get a lot of cheek and then I will respond in kind and then it's, "How could you talk to one of your fans like that?" "Well, did you note what you just said to me, mate?" So, yes, I think I've made a few of them cry. Sometimes I take great pleasure in it, I have to say, because it's good sport - words are interesting and fun and I enjoy it.

Have you ever been told off by someone famous?

Natasha Forster, Bristol

I haven't been told off per se, but I've been given some advice, shall we say,

from Peaches. What she said is between me and her but she knows my number, she reads me in a funny way that I've never really encountered before. I know that she completely gets me and completely gets my weird psyche. It was something I was talking about and with a little twinkle in her eve sort of threw it back at me and I knew she knew all my deepest, darkest secrets.

Do you still have the orange jacket that looks like the Version 2.0 cover?

@shellsenseless, via Twitter

As a matter of fact, I do, and it's about to go on display at the National Museum Of Scotland as they're about to launch an exhibition on Scottish music and I was approached to donate some items to it. What else have I put in there? You'll have to go to find out!

Who's the hardest person you know?

Liam Barwell, Melton Mowbray

I would probably say the head of The Pablove Foundation in America, who's a friend of mine, her name's Jo Ann and she is the hardest person I know. She lost a child and managed to hold herself together enough to build a foundation in his name. She runs



it and she's managed to reconnect with life and find some joy in it and that to me is hard. Hard as nails. She's amazing. Taking another crack at living is badass.

Out of your rock star friends, who is the most misunderstood? Karl Johnson, Cardiff

Courtney Love. Not so much now, because people have developed an affection for her, understanding what a rare beast she is. But I think she was grossly misunderstood for a long time and I'm happy to see she's been taken to the bosom again and people seem to have a lot of love for her now. She's a misunderstood genius.

You've dyed your hair a lot. Do you ever worry about hair loss?

Katy Butterfield, Dover

No, I have the most ridiculous amount of hair ever. I have so much hair. Strong hair. I want to change it every day. I'm currently fighting the desire to shave the whole fucking thing off and my husband is literally on his knees every night going, "Please don't, please don't shave it off!" I'm like, "Can you charge your clippers?" and he's like, "Please don't, I'm begging you!" I'm just sick of it, it bores the shit out

of me. It's a tedious bore, hahahaha!

Clipper conspiracy: Shirley is fighting a desire to shave off all her hair.

Lithium lon

Cash For Questions

What's the worst thing anyone's ever said to you?

Jason Laughton, Glasgow

This doesn't sound too bad now, but when I was young it was the worst thing anyone could ever say to me, which was, "What colour is your pubic hair?" Every time somebody said that to me, I thought I was gonna die of shame. It took me a long time to get over it. Maybe 15 years of sexual activity. Truly, I remember that horrible, burning, sinking feeling. But now I think it's glorious.

What's been the hardest moment in the band?

Lucas Bruce, Edinburgh

Failure. When we got dropped by our record labels, both in the UK and America, and I think we all felt defeated and didn't really think we'd be talented enough to rebuild ourselves. We felt hopeless, like, "Wow, this is the end of the ride, OK." We weren't really speaking to one another and I think we all blamed each other for what we perceived as failure.

What's the most disgusting thing you've ever put in your mouth?

Thea Power, Hull

Sheep's brains, in Istanbul. It tasted just like pâté. It was pretty extreme. I ate it as a kind of dare. Yes, I swallowed. Of course I did.

What's the trait you most deplore in other people?

Craig Upshaw, Newcastle Upon Tyne

Dishonesty. I can tolerate flaws in people but I can't tolerate lies. People who are fake and portray themselves as one thing but actually are another, all that shit, I really can't stand it.

In the TV series, Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles, you kissed Breaking Bad's Dean Norris to death. How was it?

Pam Greenwood, Aberystwth

It was really nice, I love him! He was so sweet with me. I was a novice and of course he is this incredible actor and I was very nervous and embarrassed. I was way out of my depth and it was very late at night on the Warner Bros lot in Hollywood and I remember just

> wanting to go home. It was something like three in the morning and he was so cool. It was nice!

To take part in Cash For Questions, go to Qthemusic.com, follow @Qmagazine on Twitter or visit Facebook (facebook.com/ qmagazine). £25 for each question printed! If yours is printed, email Qmail@Qthemusic.com to claim your money.



Positivity, punctuality and "pum pum"... the grime star delivers his golden rules for living.

GET INFORMED

The only thing I learnt at school was how to count. My experience of education was crap at the beginning, but I'm starting to flourish a bit now. What I've learnt is that life is an education in itself, especially learning how to deal with people. Knowledge is power and the person with the most information wins. You know, a well-educated man can take your whole life and everything you own with just a Parker pen and a nice sentence.

DON'T BE LATE My grandma and mum taught me everything. They weren't rich people, but they were billionaires in manners and respect. And that's helped me and put me in places where money could never put me. I swear down, manners and respect will take you places that money can't because with money everything's got a time, date and a schedule. Like imagine now if I was late for my interview with you and you've only got 25 minutes, you'd think I was a total and utter prick and you wouldn't like me and the interview would be crap.

CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WISELY Everyone should be accountable for their words because if you talk shit, you'll get banged. I still kind of live by medieval policies, like the reason why a lot of people didn't get into arguments in medieval times was because if you talked a lot of shit I might challenge you to a duel, yeah? So everyone was really careful about their words and were actually really nice to each other. But nowadays people aren't accountable for their words and actions, so you get a lot of loud talkers who take no action. I'm trying to go back to old-school England with fisticuffs at your local football pitch, you know, like proper English stuff!

WORK HARD AND REAP THE REWARDS The most important thing I've learnt about life so far is that it is very unfair. But life treats people well if you work hard for it, because obviously you can't choose your beginning but you can choose your end. For example, you were just walking around in your dad's ball bags at a stage in your life and you had no control over whether or not your dad was going to be successful or not, do you get what I mean? It was out of your hands. But now you've made the best out of that and you're a big reporter.

BE A POSITIVE FAMILY ROLE MODEL It's not always easy but you've got to look at it like this: everyone has to look to someone to take an example from, and it starts from home. The first thing that all human beings learn is by following. So if your mum never says "thank you" to your dad when you're growing up, then you won't either. So the position you take ... and personally I prefer the doggy style for the creation of life, hahaha, you've got to deal with the responsibilities of it, know what I mean? So you can't be upset about how your child is acting because it's down to you, and understand if you haven't taught your child how to act properly, other people aren't going to spend time doing it for you.

PRIORITISE THE THINGS THAT MATTER

The Grenfell situation still hasn't been sorted out. I think it's really disgusting that there's people living in hotels with mental health issues and kids still haven't got a place to call home. Like before Theresa May had the cheek to say we're going to war with Syria, couldn't she have at least got some nice decent accommodation for her English citizens? Spending thousands on missiles that are going to take lives when you still haven't sorted out lives in England, you prick!?

TREAT PEOPLE FAIRLY I don't think our bank accounts should determine whether people should say hello to each other or not. I'm talking about fairness and equality between the rich and common man - yeah man, it's right! Everyone's entitled to a bit of common decency, but you can't solve a hundred-year-old problem with a six-month solution. Equality will come, but it takes time. It's all about bridging the gap. I'm quite fortunate because rich motherfuckers like me and I'm one of the poor kids, but I'm not ashamed of where I come from. Wealth gives you freedoms but it doesn't necessarily make you spiritually free mentally.

HEALTH IS WEALTH Looking after your health is important, but, truth be told, life is weird and unpredictable. In the last couple of years I've known a lot of fitness guys - don't smoke, don't drink, go to the gym four days a week - who've collapsed from heart attacks and died, RIP. I smoke, I drink, I party, I eat the whole shebang, and I'm still here. Thank God.

DON'T TURN A BLIND EYE TO FUCKERY Meaning, you sitting back and watching something you know is totally not right happen means you've spiralled another reaction in the current events. So, for every person who stood there and watched, the police or bystander or whatever, who sees something that is not right and didn't do anything, you've just made another upset soul who doesn't have any faith in humanity and doesn't believe in righteousness or justice. So how do you think he's going to deal with the next person he approaches? And if you're in a situation where you're a bit nervous about getting involved, have a Snickers, yeah? Get some nuts!

THOU SHALT NOT BE A C**T It's nice to be nice. Positivity makes the world go round. Every action has a reaction. So if someone isn't being nice and is acting like a c**t, you know how I deal with it? "Oi!" Slap! "Stop acting like a c**t." And Commandment Number 11, the most important rule, man must respect the pum pum, yeah? We all come from womanhood, so respect the pum pum... You know what pum pum is, my G? Of course. A Snickers bar: it's got Haha. Come on! nuts. But have you

Angelic Lange Lang

It's a story as old as The Beatles: a gang of kids armed with guitars climb into a van and head off to cause mayhem and inspire worship across the British Isles. It should get old, but it remains fresh with each new telling, improving only when two new bands are thrown up at once like opposite sides of the same coin. The Jam and The Clash. Stone Roses and Happy Mondays. Blur and Suede... could firebrand South Londoners Shame and Goat Girl be writing the next chapter right now? Q spends 48 hours on the road with each to find out.









knock over the overflowing ashtray that's being passed around

and take a seat in the back; you might find the scenes inside don't quite tally with the aggression and raging dissonance present on the band's debut album, Songs Of Praise.

Departure from bassist Josh Finerty's mum's house in West London's well-to-do Kew has been delayed while he searches for a missing PlayStation controller. The vibe is less angry young men, more The Inbetweeners: On Tour, the band excitedly pivoting in their seats as they recall past tales of on-the-road buffoonery. The majority of which seem to end with them getting thrown out of various branches of Wetherspoons the length and breadth of the county.

"The day of our album release we thought it would be a good idea to put our table number on Instagram so our fans could buy us drinks on the Wetherspoons app," says guitarist Eddie Green. "They got orders for 40 bowls of Sriracha sauce, a fried egg, 18 glasses of milk and one pint of Bud Light. The bar manager came running over, 'Right, get out!""

Aged between 20 and 21, Green, Finerty, drummer Charlie Forbes, guitarist Sean Coyle-Smith and singer Charlie Steen have been in overlapping friendship groups since they were in primary school. Something borne out in both their blood brothers camaraderie and their readiness to reveal embarrassing stories about one another.

"Steen used to look just like Harry Potter," recalls Coyle-Smith, who will later on produce a picture of the two of them as children to prove it. "We all used to skate as a group but Steen couldn't, so we'd be skating along the street and he'd just be jogging alongside us."

There's not much to distinguish them from any other group of teenage mates, but one summer, having fruitlessly fumbled around with instruments individually, a fateful opportunity presented itself.

Growing up above The Railway Tavern in Tulse Hill, Forbes's family were friends with the landlord of the nearby Queens Head, the notorious Brixton boozer that served as a HQ for the Fat White Family. With the squat-rock degenerates on near-permanent tour leave, their rehearsal room was offered free of charge for the 16-year-old Forbes and his friends to practise in. The only thing they had to do in return was occasionally mop the pub's filth-stained floors.

With the prospect of being in a band more inviting than revising for their AS-levels, most days after school the five of them would wander over to The Queens; babes in the wood entering a rogues' gallery of old punks and local ne'er-do-wells where anything was permissible and adherence to licensing laws was "relaxed".





recalls Steen. "It didn't feel strange to us after school to be hanging out with these 45- and 50-year-olds. After a while they just became our friends. It was like that show Cheers, the unadulterated version of that."

Witnessing scenes of hair-curling revelry up close at a young age and receiving some hard-won words of advice from locals who included members of Stiff Little Fingers and gnarly "chemical country" outfit Alabama 3, it did serve in part as a lesson in how not to go about being in a band. Not least when a road-ravaged Fat White Family would occasionally swoop back in.

"It wasn't like constant drug abuse and

destruction, we were just happy enough to be drinking underage in a pub," notes Steen. "I had my 18th birthday there. I was upstairs with our manager and the landlord came up and pinned me up against the wall and said, 'If you ever fucking take smack I'm going to find you and I'm going to fucking kill you!' Our manager went, 'Yeah, and crack.' He looked at him and went, 'Nah, crack's alright."

More than just a den of illicit entertainment, the pub granted Shame the time and space to gradually put together the songs that would form the core of their debut, its grubby atmosphere seeping through on songs that detail sexual

It also provided an early benefactor in the unlikely shape of soft-voiced Radio 2 favourite Rumer, who heard an early demo of theirs while recording a music video downstairs and immediately offered to buy them a drum kit and a microphone, allowing Steen to graduate from simply cupping his hands round his mouth while he sang. "She also sent a stylist round to measure us," recalls Green. Forbes: "Yeah, it started to get weird pretty fast."

Alas, all good things must come to an end, and when The Queens Head shut down in 2015 to be reopened as a gastropub, Shame were out on their arses. Scrabbling around trying to beg and borrow gigs and rehearsal time, they eventually found a new home at

Curriculum vitae

Releases:

Gone Fisting, self-released EP, 2014 Visa Vulture, non-album single, Dead Oceans, 2017 Songs Of Praise, LP, Dead Oceans,

Personnel:

Charlie Steen Vocalist. Age: 20 Shame's charismatic leader caused an incident at a European festival last year when he walked into

hip-hop collective The Internet's dressing room thinking it was where he could get the wi-fi code.

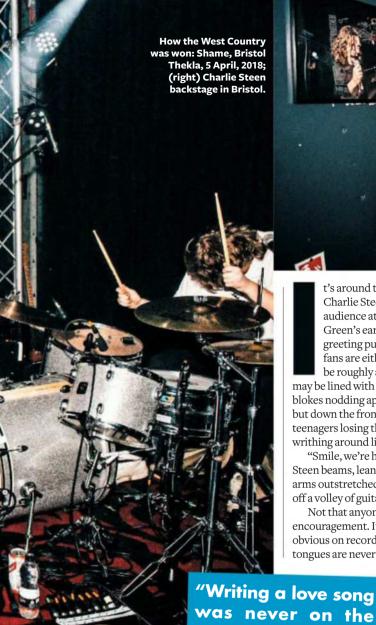
Sean Coyle-Smith Guitar Age: 21 Steen's childhood best friend. Was once so drunk after a show that he woke up the next morning in a student hall of residence and tried to eat a frozen chicken believing it was part of the headline act's tour rider. Maintains he never defecated down a chimney.

Eddie Green Guitar. Age: 21 One of Shame's very first shows was playing a village fete in Kew (for which they were docked £20 due to Steen's bad language). Unbeknown to Green, his dad was playing cricket less than 50 yards away. "He thought I'd come to watch him, he didn't even know I was in a band."

Charlie Forbes Drums. Age: 21 A source of constant sarcasm

whose contacts in South London's publican industry facilitated Shame coming into existence. Very nearly missed the band's recent show in Cardiff so he could watch Liverpool beat Man City in the pub.

Josh Finerty Bass. Age: 21 **Baby-faced Finerty is responsible** for organising most of the band's business and – as an ex-drummer in the school jazz band - is the most proficient musician in the group.



t's around the 30-second mark that Charlie Steen first clambers into the audience at Cardiff's Clwb Ifor Bach. Green's earlier observation when greeting punters outside that "all our fans are either 15 or 50" has proved to be roughly accurate. The venue's walls may be lined with older, pint-clutching blokes nodding appreciatively along, but down the front it's a tinderbox of teenagers losing their collective shit and writhing around like a bucketful of eels.

"Smile, we're here to entertain you," Steen beams, leaning into the front row with arms outstretched before his bandmates fire off a volley of guitar riffs, "enjoy yourselves."

Not that anyone needs much encouragement. It might not always be obvious on record, but onstage, Shame's tongues are never too far from their cheeks.

agenda because l'd

never been in love.

So why not write

about stuff that I

was fascinated by?"

Charlie Steen

Gleefully taking up the role of master of ceremonies, Steen marches back and forth, wagging his finger and gesticulating like a headmaster delivering an over-animated school assembly. "We're a Christian rock band from London this next one's a Lynyrd Skynyrd cover." Half the venue climb

onstage for Gold Hole, the scenes of youthful jubilation clashing against the song's seedy lyrics and howling goth-rock. Once it all ends, with Steen repeatedly shouting, "I can't get it up!" the band stick around to talk to the crowd, waiting until everyone has had a selfie, a hello or an autograph before finally nipping out for a well-earned cigarette.

he following evening in Bristol, Shame's frontman is in good spirits. Having retired at a relatively sensible 2am, he's enjoying a smoke and a couple of glasses of wine before they take to the stage at Thekla, a former German cargo ship converted to a live venue by pop eccentric Viv Stanshall.

Ten days ago, the band returned from America where, for a laugh, three of them decided to get their hair cut into mullets. Combined with his earring, Coyle-Smith's cut gives him the air of a 16th-century buccaneer. Forbes's, unfortunately, makes him look like a full-on, NASCAR-watching hick. Luckily for Steen, his shorter cut has mainly grown upwards, its curls falling forwards above the wire-rimmed glasses he wears offstage.

Away from the gaggle of the group, he has a more thoughtful presence, speaking quickly and unguardedly through topics that move from the importance of creating safe spaces at gigs to flawed ideas of masculinity and a recent encounter in Kentucky with a member of a reclusive blue-skinned family known as the Blue Fugates.

The son of former Punch editor James Steen and a voracious reader, he attributes his lyrical fascination with life's darker underbelly to his favourite authors, Irvine Welsh, Bret Easton Ellis and Hubert Selby Jr. among them, and a lifelong obsession with Roxy Music's sex-doll fantasy In Every Dream Home A Heartache.

"Darkness is an area you're naturally attracted to as a person, whether you admit it or not," he says. "When I wrote Gold Hole I hadn't even had sex but I was obsessed with this sugar daddy imagery being promoted by Lana Del Rey or whatever pop star. Writing a love song was never on the agenda because I'd never been in love, so why not write about stuff that I was fascinated by?"

By his own admission "a chubby stoner with spots" growing up, Steen weaponised his insecurities once he started playing with Shame.

"I always believed that no one would ever find me attractive. There was a period where I believed I was completely asexual," he throws in with unexpected frankness. "Any bullying I've had in my life worked to my advantage when it comes to performing. If you've had every insult thrown at you, you have nothing left to lose when you get up onstage. You turn it into a form of empowerment. So what if I can't get any girls, I'm going to get up onstage, take my top off >>>

The Windmill pub, off Brixton Hill. "It had similar community standards as The Queens," says Steen. "Kind of anything goes," chips in Forbes.

Their first ever show may have been

to a crowd of just five people before The Queens Head's weekly reggae night started, but Shame had noticed enough strangers repeatedly showing up to gigs since to realise they could probably put on their own night. Inviting friends of theirs who had just started bands to join them, including Goat Girl and recent Domino signings Sorry, they started up the charmingly named Chimney Shitters ("That came from Sean telling a story that he once got locked out of his house and had to take a shit down the chimney," grins Steen). Not only did Chimney Shitters kickstart The Windmill's current status as a nexus for the growing wave of new South London guitar groups, it's also where the sweaty bedlam of Shame's shows cemented their reputation as the most exciting live band in the capital.

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other night, he'll be stood up there for the audience's pleasure. Shirtless, smiling and, for 45 minutes or so, untouchable.



The kids are alright: Goat Girl (from left) Rosy Jones, Ellie Rose Davies, Lottie Pendlebury and Naima Iliana, Edinburgh, 10 April, 2018.

Dat C

Jenny Stevens heads to Newcastle and spends two nights inside Goat Girl's youthful maelstrom of chaos, fury and hilarity.

Photographs: Gaëlle Beri

oat Girl are hard to keep up with. Words tumble out of them. Ideas percolate. They speak in an un-cynical torrent of idealism that is infectious to be around. And that is

where we are going to be, for the next two nights, amid the thrill of chatter and chaos with these punk upstarts in Newcastle and Edinburgh.

For anyone who has heard their self-titled debut album, which opens with an uncompromising attack on the state of British politics ("Build a bonfire, put the Tories on the top. Put the DUP in the middle and we'll burn the fucking lot") it's unsurprising that their conversation will steer rapidly to the state of the nation: Corbyn, London's housing crisis, the "fucked up" strangulation of state education. They rail on subjects, from rape culture to female sexuality, New-Age spirituality and growing

your own vegetables, with a fluidity that it's hard to keep up with.

It is also quite probable that they are the only band writing about London's air quality crisis: "Find an antidote for this accumulating smoke," they sing in solemn harmony on Viper Fish.

If everyone became self-sufficient, even in part, says guitarist Ellie Rose Davies. "It would really fuck the system up in a really beautiful way."

meets Goat Girl in Newcastle's Ouseburn Valley, where the momentous Byker Viaduct meets the Ouseburn Viaduct. Everything here stands

as a relic of the Industrial Revolution: the paint factory is now a farm, the old mill is now The Cluny, where the South London four-piece will play tonight. It's ironic we should meet here, in glorious sunshine, the grass soft and mossy, daffodils open and strident. Goat Girl's self-titled debut album >>>





is a document of the London they grew up in: the injustice, the inequality, the creeps and freaks and perverts. It is an album of fury and disgust, shame and sexual desire. The dark places of the mind, the chaos of the city.

They formed when they were just 17 and signed to Rough Trade a mere three months later - the day after Britain voted to leave the EU. "It was probably too soon," says Davies, reflectively. "People treated us like children." They have spent the last three years honing their craft and their songs, most of which singer/guitarist Lottie Pendlebury started writing when she was just 15. Producer Dan Carey was brought on board, helping them turn their spiralling ideas into a defiant 19 songs - none of which is over three minutes plus interludes, "like a book with different chapters and scenes," says Pendlebury.

Post-punk riffs take about turns through folk and grunge, which simmer under threepart harmonies. Creep On The Train is a story about a man Pendlebury saw trying to film her in a carriage, which ends with a violent revenge fantasy made all the more alarming as a sultry violin plays as the scenario unfolds. "A lot of our songs have that tone to it," says Pendlebury. "They sound quite jolly but you're actually singing about wanting to smash someone's head in."

"A lot of our songs sound quite jolly, but you're actually singing about wanting to smash someone's head in." **Lottie Pendlebury**

Davies nods: "It's like smiling at someone with an axe in your hand, ready to blow."

"It was about the frustration I felt at not doing anything," Pendlebury continues. "I just sat there and tried to cover my body up. Afterwards, I thought, 'Why am I receiving this and why am I fucking not standing up for myself?' And I always have that feeling, like I'm really pathetic, but these occasions shouldn't even exist, I shouldn't have to train myself to deal with it. Men need to be taught how to be fucking human. We shouldn't feel that we should respond to rape culture, because rape culture should be non-existent."

That experience, she says, "left me feeling so sad within myself, which I found so unjust. I wanted to kill him for making me feel like that. And that's the thing with music, it gives you the safety to say whatever you want, it gives you control. When we all sing it together onstage, it's ritualistic, it's empowering."

he morning after their Newcastle gig, the rain is torrential as we pack into the back of their tour van. They are a rag-tag bunch: Pendlebury wearing wideleg Levi's with the label still on ("They're a present for my sister! Don't tell her!"), Davies in a baby blue furry jacket that belonged to her grandma. Drummer Rosy Jones carries a canvas shopping bag that's exploding with screwed-up clothes she doesn't, she admits, have any idea how to pack. As the bus steers through the rain, they



recall how they met with all the vim of a morning after the night before - it is a detailed web of friends and nights spent at Brixton's Windmill venue.

Davies and bassist Naima Iliana had known each other at school in New Cross, Iliana met Pendlebury at a house party when they were 15 while taking care of a friend who was "so fucked she'd passed out. We were forced to talk to each other on this bed, and we bonded." The three of them started making music together, performing at an open-mic night in Hampstead called Pentameters. "My mum used to drive us there. It was run by this guy whose one claim to fame was that he used to play harmonica in Hawkwind," says Iliana. "They were all like rich, old rock stars from like the '60s. He was always banging on about knowing William Burroughs," says Davies.

They were obsessed with the 2005 rock doc Dig!, chronicling the bitter rivalry between Brian Jonestown Massacre and The



Animal magic: (above) Goat Girl take it to the bridge, Newcastle; (right) Rosy Jones and friend go sightseeing in Edinburgh.





point of even caring what people think of them. That's what I love about it. They were still just so excited about music - everywhere they went they had a guitar and were writing. It didn't feel clean or clinical like most music

the sound," says Pendlebury. And so in came Jones. "I joined when I was 18. I met Naima at a Fat Whites gig. She was with a guy I knew." Romantically? "Well, we got off a few times," laughs Iliana.

Spend any amount of time with Goat Girl and it's clear there is a yin and a yang to the

group. Iliana and Davies live together in East London and are self-proclaimed "homebirds" who like to "chill the fuck out". Pendlebury and Jones are the hedonists. They live together with two Goldsmiths students in Deptford in what they describe as a "tip". "What's that programme? How Clean Is

Curriculum vitae

Releases:

Scum, non-album single, Rough Trade, 2016 Crow Cries, non-album single, Rough Trade, 2017 Goat Girl, LP, Rough Trade, 2018

Personnel:

Lottie Pendlebury

Vocalist/guitarist. Age: 21 Goat Girl's head wordsmith spent her teenage years pretending she

was a Goldsmiths student studying conceptual sculpture to blag into parties. Her mum is a contemporary dancer and her dad is a viola player in a minimalist quartet. "I'd hear them playing Steve Reich in the attic and it was so creepy.""

Rosy Jones Drums. Age: 21 Chief hedonist Rosy likes to climb things - most recently the roof of Kentish Town Forum where she

got hollered down by security. She went to her first gig aged seven with her parents. It was Avril Lavigne: "I sat on my dad's lap with my hands on my ears and just cried," she says.

Naima Iliana Bass. Age: 21 The band's spiritual Earth Mother: she rubs lavender oil onto the band's pillows before they go to bed each night, and travels with crystals. She learned a lot from

her hippy mum, who taught her "amazing, different ideas about magic and witches and stuff".

Ellie Rose Davies Guitar. Age: 21 Chief organiser Ellie is the only one with a working phone. For her, making music is a political statement: "It's so important to create, and not solely take in things and consume." She's also an obsessive cook and makes a mean chicken laksa.

GOAT GIRL

Your House? We thought about applying for that so someone could just come round and get rid of the filth!" says Jones, eating a roast chicken dinner with gusto at 11.30am at a motorway service station. "I used to be vegan," she laughs, holding up the carcass. Pendlebury had thrown a party the night before they left for this stint of gigs. "I brought the whole of the Windmill back, like 40 people. Our housemate's really annoyed with us..." It's a precarious balance of personalities, but it works for them. When Q had arrived at their Airbnb earlier that morning, Iliana answered, electric toothbrush in her mouth, while howls of laughter came from the bedrooms behind her. Duvets were bundled on the floor, items of clothing strewn around like a high school sleepover.

They christened themselves with stage names: "I guess it started as a joke to distance ourselves from our real personalities," says Pendlebury. "We don't want to take ourselves too seriously." Her stage name, Clottie Cream, was a nickname given to her by "this rude boy I went out with for like two weeks. I met him at a squat rave." Rosy Bones, just "likes bones, parts of the body, stuff like that". Naima, whose "hippy" mum named her after the John Coltrane song, has Naima Jelly: "It makes no fucking sense." "And mine is LED," says Davies. "I thought it sounded funny, like a rapper's name. I'd never introduce myself as a person like that because I'd feel like a wanker. But that's it taking the piss out of those people who think they'll get so famous that they can't have their real names, it's ridiculous."



"everything to just be by word of mouth". As part of South London's DIY scene that counts Shame, Sorry and Fat White Family among its kin, this was possible at the beginning, when they played in and around local venues. As they got bigger, they came around to reaching wider audiences. But as the first generation to use Facebook from a young age, Iliana worries about its effects. "I wonder what the impact will be in like 30 years' time, on mental health and memory and what's the word... the thing where you can't pay attention for long enough?" ADD? "Ha – see?!" she laughs. "Our attention span has been lowered to such a degree. We take in so much, but it's all massively superficial."

(Clockwise, from

Only Davies has a smartphone, the rest have old Nokia bricks. Their management





and label often seem to have trouble tracking them down, something that makes Jones cackle with delight.

If there is one thing Goat Girl do not like, it's being told what to do - in fact there are two songs on the album with that theme, I Don't Care, parts one and two. They talk about demos and protests they've been on: Iliana bunked off high school to go to the student fee protests and ended up getting kettled for hours. "Corbyn is the representative that we've been looking for for how many years now?" says Pendlebury. "You can complain but he's a million times better than most of the people in his position."

e arrive at an Airbnb in Edinburgh at the top of a cobbled street next to Sneaky Pete's, tonight's gig venue. They stampede in and check out the rooms - which are definitely nicer than last night's. There are even some

fake roses on the table in a plastic jug.

"Woah!" they all shout, running up and down the stairs. Their confidence and selfassuredness is powerful. "We just try and be ourselves," says Jones. Sat at this tiny table, in her nylon tracksuit bottoms, shaved head, pinstripe suit jacket done up with a bit of string and a T-shirt with a giant strawberry on it - you can tell she really means it. Do they care about what they wear onstage? "What, do some bands get changed before

We thought about applying

for that so someone could

just come round and get rid

of the filth!" Rosy Jones

put on what I'm going to wear for the day." "We're not shy about anything to do with our bodies," says Jones. "We're all sexually open people, we're always talking about it." Conversation steers to sex, and their song The Man, in which Pendlebury sings, "Bite

they get onstage?" Well, yes. "Ha! No, I just

my lips and taste my hips." "It's me imagining how I want a guy to experience me. It's inspiring as a woman to be able to say those things," she says. "I wanted to structure the song like an orgasm, how the melody becomes higher and higher until you're screaming at the top of your lungs."

he Edinburgh show is sweaty and cathartic - onstage they are relaxed, even nonchalant. "I hate bands who have that detachment, and are so unrelatable. I never want it to be a separate thing of us onstage and the audience," says Pendlebury. "I feel confident in the way we perform, but as soon as a song ends I don't know what to do. I'm just lost in playing the music. I'm scared that comes across as arrogant. But I want the music to exist as its own form. I want it to not need my personality."

After the gig, a crowd of people peel off into the streets, some still holding glasses of vodka and orange from the venue (this is the second drinking vessel Q has seen Jones nick

> from an establishment in one day). Are these all your friends? "Well, we know one of them from a band we played with once, the rest are kind of stragglers..." Jones says - as if she can't quite admit that they are being followed by fans. The mist is thick now, and the streetlights make giant moons on the damp pavement.

We climb the gothic stairs to a bar owned by a friend of a friend and they smoke and drink

and chatter. You get the feeling that nothing can constrain the four of them. Ask them their ambitions for the future and they say, "just to be able to make whatever music we want". In fact, the only thing that does seem to be constraining them is the city itself. They're off to America soon - they've only been once before. You suspect it would suit them: the freedom, the open space, the wildness. They're thinking about moving to Texas maybe, if all their friends came with them. And they all want to have a go at "living off the land, being self-sufficient." For one brief moment, they pause. Silence. Ellie looks up, into the damp grey night, the open road stretched out right in front of her.

STEPHEN MALKMUS

The ex-Pavement frontman on the records that shaped him.

FOREIGNER DOUBLE VISION (1978, ATLANTIC)



"I was 12 years old when this came out and around that time I was going through a kind of transformation; developing my own taste in music among my cohorts. I was into Kiss, that was my first band, then came new wave and I was buying cassettes of Get Happy!! by Elvis Costello And The Attractions and The Clash's Give 'Em Enough Rope, but I was also

into Foreigner, Aerosmith and Rush because I had no idea what was 'cool'. I thought Double Vision was an awesome record that sounded tough and was really no different to the new wave stuff I liked."

THE SPECIALS MORE SPECIALS (1980, 2 TONE)



"When I was a kid I bought the first Specials album on vinyl and it blew me away. In LA at the time people really took to ska – we loved the clothes and its world view, plus it was kind of related to punk because it was outsider music. That record was so catchy and fun to listen to, while the second LP, More Specials, was a little darker, more Jamaican in feeling,

but had this super-cool cover of this nutty, mixed-race band with guys with missing teeth and wearing upside down sunglasses who looked like they were having a laugh. It was all about just loving the music."

SECTION 25 ALWAYS NOW (1981, FACTORY)



"I played this record a lot when I was a student. It's a really dark album and is good to listen to when you're stoned. It's got the space, echo and amazing drums, thanks to a masterclass production by Martin Hannett. It has this kind of deconstructed, ESG feel to it – dirty and minimal, with deep bass and bright drums. This is a totally mysterious record and I can

see why Kanye West and his producers sampled Hit from here [on 2016's FML]. It's Martin Hannett at his most coked-out and brilliant, evoking bleak, rainy days on the dole."

THE VANDALS

PEACE THRU VANDALISM (1982, CHI-COM)



"After the new wave cassette days, my friends and I got into the California hardcore scene – Dead Kennedys, Black Flag, Bad Religion. Also local punk bands like The Vandals, who I can't say were good, but I can say that I thought they were awesome. They were from Orange County, kind of like Offspring 'broworld', and when you're 14 it sounded like the most fun,

catchy, obnoxious, snotty and juvenile music around. I also liked The Exploited, The Partisans, GBH and Discharge, bands who weren't very PC but, for better or worse, probably changed my life a little bit."

THE WOODS BAND

THE WOODS BAND (1971, GREENWICH GRAMOPHONE COMPANY)



"This is sick and very rare. I first heard it in the late-'90s when I was into bands such as Fairport Convention, Bert Jansch and Steeleye Span. When husband and wife Gay and Terry Woods left Steeleye Span, they made this album together. It has this kind of rock'n'roll, Sticky Fingers feel to it – sort of groovy, acoustic-based rock music with a hippy thing

going on too. It's a really good, beautiful record, which for some reason doesn't have much of a reputation, but should get reissued. I still listen to it a lot nowadays, much more than I still listen to Foreigner!"

BILL ORCUTT

A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS

A NEW WAY TO PAY OLD DEBTS

(2009, PALILALIA)

"This guy is awesome, he is a genius guitar player who plays primarily improvisational, deconstructed, solo acoustic music with two strings missing from his instrument. He started off in the '90s in a power trio called Harry Pussy who were this amazing, energetic noise band – really confrontational and intense. Sometimes

I'll watch an incredible Bill Orcutt performance on YouTube and see comments saying, 'That's noise. It sucks!' But that's just stupid, because it doesn't suck, it's original, insane music that is really fun to listen to."

WHISKY DAVID

RUSTY ROCK (1974, ARIOLA)



"Whisky David is a Scottish-born guy who went on tour to Spain with The Yardbirds in '66 and liked it so much he stayed. He made this one proto-glam album and it's insane. The cover has got him wearing a kilt, trapped in a bottle of whisky, and it sounds like it was recorded in a bottle too! All the instruments sound tiny and compressed, but I still think

it's the ultimate party album. There's a ballad on here called Charly about his dead dog, 'Charly, my little friend!' he sings, kind of sounding like Rod Stewart if he drank Drano. It's silly but fun."

RICHARD DAWSON

PEASANT (2017, WEIRD WORLD)



"Now I'm an older dude, I often get new music sent to me by record labels, which I really like because you never know what to expect. It's similar to when I was a 12-year-old and discovering stuff for the first time. This is how I got to hear Peasant, music aimed at muso nerds like myself, and it was easily my favourite LP of last year. It has a kind of creepy, digitally-

recorded acoustic vibe to it, even though I'm not sure if it was recorded digitally. I listen to it a lot, which is a good sign because it means for me there's mystery to it, something there that I find beguiling."



Streets

<u>|</u>

Watchin

Few Britons are quite as familiar with the stressful fragility of life as young, black, working-class Londoners. But those streets have also produced some of the biggest domestic stars of recent times, and they remain Britain's most fertile musical breeding ground. Jazz Monroe meets three of the most notable voices from the next wave of grime and drill, and hears tales of hope and wisdom amongst the woe.

Photographs: Jordan Curtis Hughes





Today is the first convincing

day of spring - the one that ambushes you with sweat patches, wafting barbecues, passers-by exhibiting undue irritation - and that is a day to celebrate. The celebration is heralded in cabs pumping R&B, on climbing frames swarmed by screaming, delighted kids, and, nestled on a housing block in West London, by a bunch of mates in floral shirts and tracksuits, necking Corona and Volvic while perched in the open boot of a black Volkswagen, finding nearly everything funny.

The location is the Mozart Estate, where tropical trees loom over back garden walls, and where former resident Big Zuu, a meticulous, playful, hard-not-to-love MC, is fast becoming a local hero. Today, the unassuming 22-year-old is in a grey Nike tracksuit, one smoke behind his ear and another in his mouth. He's as multidirectionally large as somebody called Big Zuu ought to be. Earlier, undercover police cruised into the estate and harassed a group lurking nearby, but Zuu defused tensions. "That's normal," he confirms later, laughing. "We said, 'We're doing a shoot.' They were like, 'That's good, when's it coming out?' and walked off. We were smoking our zoots in their face!"

In person, he has the same gregarious manner that catches your ear in his music never too serious, but sincere enough to make you care. His personality is magnetic, a necessary asset in the present grime climate. After dominating UK pop culture in 2015, the scene is in a transitional phase of upsurging talent and dwindling interest. The patronage of taste-makers Kanye and Drake has done little to endear major labels, whose habit for pairing MCs with house-lite producers - think Dizzee x Calvin Harris has prompted stars such as Zuu, Stormzy and Novelist to release independently.

Deeper woes plague the underground, too. Last November, Sadiq Khan finally revoked Form 696, the notorious riskassessment document that green-lit the open

> "I thought I could be more of an influencer in youth work if I became big in music. Now when I talk to youths that listen to my music, I can feel the power amplify, because I have that rapport already." Big Zuu



profiling of black and minority-ethnic events. But it had already devastated the capital's live scene, creating a hostile culture toward black artists and the venues who book them, often at great financial risk.

In this dance-forward vanguard genre, the shuttering of peaceful nightlife institutions rewired the scene's DNA. "Labels are more focused on the sound of right now," Big Zuu reflects, pointing to J Hus's Afrobeatinflected anthems. As the club culture of

grime disappears, attention is shifting to crossover beats and lush YouTube visuals, a poor fit for its manic energy. "If we keep making rap, we're forgetting the base of our country's music," Zuu adds. "But if we keep pushing our music, it can reach crazy heights."

In a house near the alleyway where he's telling me this, Zuhair Hassan discovered grime aged 10 via online rips of pirate-radio clashes. He grew up with his single mother, who had fled Sierra Leone during the civil

war and, like many embattled parents, considered the success of her son's education to be the measure of her life decisions. The outlook promised little: Zuu's appetite for disruption proved a scourge to despairing teachers. But his fierce intelligence ruled out exclusion, and he was driven, he says, by the "stigma" of having a Muslim single mother from West Africa.

By then, the Mozart Estate had become a battleground for rival gangs from nearby

Ladbroke Grove and South Kilburn. Zuu stayed off the streets by frequenting a studiofitted youth club, where he'd munch sweets and record tracks with his distant cousin, AJ Tracey. In 2014 came two breakthroughs: he secured a spot at uni, and MTP, his grime crew with Tracey, made its public debut. For 15 months, Zuu juggled social-work studies with nights perfecting his bars. In that time, the likes of Skepta were evolving from cult legends to pop-cultural icons. Zuu eventually conceded that it was now or never. "We had the essence, the radio, sending for each other, cliques and groups, new instrumentals, new swag," Zuu says of their early buzz, swigging from a massive bottle of water. "Before that, not everyone was wearing Nike tracksuits. Mandem were wearing jeans with a nice belt. But everything changed. The grime resurgence was pivotal. That's why, by the end of 2015, I was thinking, 'Let's get it."

Rather than abandon social work altogether, Zuu's focus on music heralded a renewed responsibility. "I thought I could be more of an influencer in youth work if I became big in music," he explains. "Now when I talk to youths that listen to my music, I can feel the power amplify, because I have that rapport already. So how many people can I change now?" The only person left to convince was mum. "At first she was like, 'My son's a dropout," he admits, grinning. "But eventually, when she saw that I was making money from music, she said, 'You know what? Cool. Now give me some money!""

n a splintered grime scene, Kojo Kankam, aka Novelist, and Big Zuu have plenty in common. Like Zuu, Nov is passionate and emphatic, a man whose laugh makes you laugh. They're both grime originals, unswayed by American trap beats. And for a 21-year-old, Novelist, too, possesses striking purpose. Among his virtues is

a political charisma that first struck me at Glastonbury 2016, the evening after the Brexit vote. As the Albarns of the world issued dejected laments, Novelist led a tent packed with mud-dappled teens in an uproarious chant of "Fuck David Cameron!"

That was the crest of the South-East Londoner's hype wave. A few years before, he'd established an endearing grime crew called The Square, cut his teeth as a leading MC on pirate radio, and released pioneering collaborations with producer Mumdance, spraying verbal salvos over paranoid beats that evoked the deconstructed instrumentals

"I got stabbed in my chest. After that I realised life is thin ice. Don't skate on the wrong part." Novelist

incubating at club night Boxed. But it was tracks like Street Politician, which rallies "black boys stuck in the system", that stamped his mark. Glastonbury was a victory lap, but also a launchpad to more lucrative stages. And it was at that moment that he vanished from the face of the Earth.

Eighteen months have passed on the afternoon Novelist meets me at Abbey Road, finally back in the public eye. In these salubrious surrounds, engineers have been mixing his laboriously self-produced debut album, Novelist Guy. Lounging on a sofa is Novelist's ever-smiling manager, Dion, who doubles as his ever-smiling mother. He clearly inherited her magnetism: unaccountably trustful, the pair share an innate ability to make you, a stranger, feel spiritually recognised, like an old friend who just walked in the room. When I ask about Novelist's childhood, his response - "my family love each other" - somehow sounds neither trite nor defensive, but rather like something profound that scholars could study and learn from.

This profoundly loving household benefited from the presence of Novelist's uncle, who'd sequester himself away upstairs making grime and deep house on Fruity Loops and Reason, sometimes enlisting Dion to sing. Novelist says his childhood was "blessed", coming under threat only when street life intruded on his teens.

"Not everyone's family has a lot of love," he reflects. "So sometimes you can think, 'Why is that person acting like that?' But you don't realise, at home, they're going through a madness." Curious, I ask whether a specific experience brought that divide into focus. "Yeah," he says. "When I got

"That day was awful," Dion mutters finally, elaborating in whispers to the publicist.

"After that I realised life is thin ice," Novelist goes on. "Don't skate on the wrong part." Just 13 at the time, he experienced what sounds like dissociation. "When you see things on the news, you never think it's



Party politics: Novelist inspires a downcast crowd at Glastonbury the day after the Brexit vote, June 2016.



going to happen to you. When I realised I was bleeding" – he's swivelled his chair now, orating to the room - "I was thinking, 'Oh my days! How did this happen to me?' I remember the thought going through my head: 'I'm in a news article all of a sudden."

Hospitalised with a punctured lung, he came to believe he survived by refusing to die. He also credits his faith - not just with preserving him, but for dissolving his need for revenge. Instead, he renewed his focus on the beats and bars he'd been composing for years, resulting now in Novelist Guy, a tight, brilliantly bizarre journey designed to "raise the standard of what people call grime music". It veers from hardcore grime to punky synth abstractions, "pursuit music and police chases - the sound of me entering a new atmosphere," he enthuses.

For an MC closely attuned to social injustice - at one point, he dissolves into outrage on the topic of nurses' pay-Novelist's trademark lyrics are surprisingly impressionistic, wrestling with the warring voices in his head. One exception is Stop Killing The Mandem, an urgent, clubby bombardment that begins with Novelist barking the title like a drill sergeant 16 times.

"Too many people are dying, fam," he says of his vision for the track. "People need to start acknowledging what's happening, and not acting like their words don't have some kind of effect."



London Calling

The grime-adjacent MCs representing London rap's many tendrils.

Criteria: From London; pre-debut LP (or just out); songs from the last 12 months.

Headie One x RV **Know Better**

Equally playful and haunting, this classic of UK drill is a testimony to Headie's calculating menace.

Flohio Bands

A rising voice in UK hiphop, South Londoner Funmi Ohio casually perfects clubland grime on her breakout single.

Big Zuu **Blatant Truth**

The dexterous MC vows to "catch snitch like Quidditch" on his crafty standout single.

Novelist

Start

Novelist's jarring synth-and-piano oddity gathers sonic and emotional complexity alongside his sharp motivational mantras.

interviews, perks up when defending his

K Trap **Anything Else**

A verbal bombardment over lurching piano, the UK driller's latest showcases his smoky allure.

Money Spree

The leading UK drill crew get summery on this Glorious Twelfth mixtape highlight.

Ms Banks R.I.P. (ft. Loski)

Nicki Minaj-approved rapper Ms Banks links

with Harlem Spartans star for an infectious trap odyssey.

Capo Lee Dream

The North London MC's punchy flows anchor a soundscape of bubbly echoes and whistles.

AJ Tracey

Tour Team (ft. 67)

Big Zuu's MTP bandmate enlists an atypically chilled 67 for this catchy verbal kickaround.

Ms Banks:

trap attack.

Octavian

Party Here

Straddling rap, R&B and Afrobeat, this vanguard anthem points to the capital's bright, borderless future.





"I don't sugar-coat situations. I like to make it as realistic as possible, so you can see it like you were there." Headie One

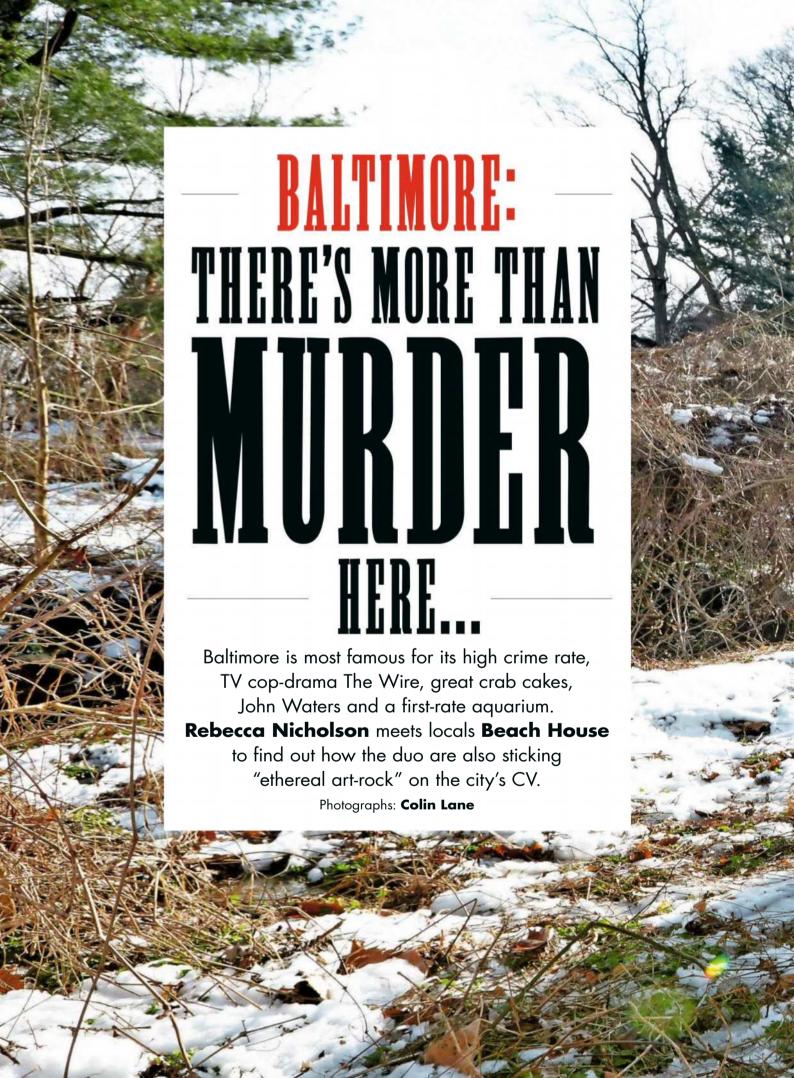
music. His quiet phone manner is less standoffish than sullen, the slow dredging of thoughts beneath an ice sheet of introspection. Growing up with his cabdriver dad and sister in Tottenham, he played football and wrote freestyles, usually to spar with school friends. As life got more serious, so did the music: after some "little holidays" - including a spell in prison for dealing cocaine and heroin, a charge he disputes -Headie says he gained the perspective to "speak about [his] mistakes, so other people can learn from them". He sees little value in hand-wringing over violent social commentary. Politicians baulking at morally ugly drill should first address the morally ugly conditions, he argues.

Headie One's biggest and most controversial hit is Know Better, released this

January, after a viral video appeared to show several young people assault him in broad daylight. The response track alludes to retaliatory attacks on his alleged gangland rivals from Wood Green, who may have been behind the video, though Headie elides identifying details with a "shh-shh" hook. It's a captivating performance, his agile wordplay irresistible. But those who join the dots, matching lyrical clues with contemporaneous news reports of violent crime, will find unsettling parallels. In Headie's telling, the purpose of such uncomfortable realism is not to gloat, but to reveal his brutal reality and, through success, to escape it.

For Big Zuu, finding a way off the streets has given his work a moral purpose. "People say, 'You think because you're making positive bars, you're better.' I don't think I'm lyrically better, or that people are writing in the wrong way. I just feel like we have some responsibility." He stops short of criticising drill music. "Headie One represents something different to me, but it's not some negative mad energy. He represents what's going on and what's real. I try to bring the core problems in people's faces."

Back at Abbey Road, hunching forward in a swivel chair, Novelist is similarly reflective. With the disclaimer that he's "enjoyed music that alludes to violent crime", he describes an epiphany he experienced in Australia under a transcendent sunrise. "The sky was dark blue over there" - he points to the corner of the studio ceiling, representing a pocket of sky-"purple and light blue here" - his finger arcs towards the mixing desk - "and bright yellow where the sun was rising." It struck him that many back home had scarcely left their neighbourhood, let alone Europe. And fewer still have befriended a kangaroo. "Why would I encourage anyone to kill each other?" he sighs. "I've seen a koala; I've held snakes. People feel, 'That's never gonna be me. I can't get out.' You can. You can. Definitely can." [9]





MUNI is quieter than usual, eerily so. The streets are practically empty and wearing the remnants of the heavy snow from the nor'easter storm which swept through the city yesterday. Beach House's Victoria Legrand and Alex Scally are the only customers in Coffee Land. a tiny café that reverberates to classical music, its volume readjusting dramatically of its own accord, as if to soundtrack their conversation. They're discussing how locals often try to present a "normal reality" for Baltimore, as if it's just another large city in the North-east of the USA. "That's just not the place," explains Scally.

Beach House are the kind of band that tend to attract ethereal adjectives - gauzy, hazy, spacey - and while they're able to conjure up a soft-focus mood if they choose to, they're also a tight, structured,

synth-pop machine that's as heavy as it is breathless. Their new album, 7, dispenses with any idea that they're easy "dream-pop" with a brisk, bracing new energy and focus. They were formed here in 2004, when Scally wound up playing bass for a band that Legrand had moved to Baltimore for, a year after leaving university. That project soon fell apart, but they realised there was magic between the two of them, and they decided to keep going as a duo. "I remember fondly the first few times we had conversations after rehearsals in the basement in Southwest Baltimore, you'd be trying to leave and I'd be standing in the doorway," recalls Legrand. Her speaking voice is flecked with gravel, but betrays little sign of the gorgeous androgyny in her vocals. "There were times when I'd feel like a crazy girl, just talking, talking and talking, and it was just... easy. So it kept going from there. Friendship." It's a relationship that has endured, and, two decades in, they have a familial closeness, with one picking up the ends of the other's thoughts if they start to drop away.

Scally was raised in Baltimore, while Legrand was born in Paris and grew up in Philadelphia, though she lived in Baltimore for a short time as a child. Both are fascinated by what they call "spooky" connections that they discovered years after they first got to know each other. "My aunts babysat relatives of hers," Scally explains, while Legrand's mother worked at a daycare centre in a church that was run by Father Joe, a priest who married Scally's parents in the '70s. "It's very hard not to find some weird web of connection," Scally says. "It's a weird town that way."

Living in Baltimore was relatively cheap, which made it easier for the band to exist - as gentrification starts to poke its head into the city, they joke that they shouldn't have mentioned just how cheap, so often - but the place clearly suits them and what they do. "There's a lot of introspective, internal stuff going on. People aren't very flashy about what they're doing," Legrand explains. Beach House's success was a slow burn for the first few years. It's been a decade since their second album, Devotion, came out, and it was that record which made them realise the band would

66 Every record is chasing a force field. Once you feel like this force field is caught, then you know you're done, for that time. "

Victoria Legrand





John Waters and nine other notable Baltimore residents.

David Simon

lockdale

lebbyille

The creator of The Wire grew up in nearby DC but as a iournalist, he spent 12 years working as a reporter on the Baltimore Sun. He wrote a number of books about the city's drug trade and turned his hand to TV, eventually creating The Wire.

Dru Hill

The '90s R&B group and progenitor of Sisqó are named after Druid Hill Park, on the west side of Baltimore. In their early days, they worked together in a fudge factory and sang to customers.

Edgar Allan Poe

The house in which the goth overlord lived for two years

from 1833-35 is now a museum. The author died in the city in 1849 after being found wandering its streets in a confused state; his grave site is a big tourist attraction.

Future Islands

Encouraged by musician friends, the band moved from **North Carolina to Baltimore** in 2008, and had been going for eight years when an appearance on Letterman went viral, sending them interstellar.

Mo'Nique

The actor got her start in comedy after being dared to perform at a stand-up night at the Baltimore Comedy Factory Outlet by her brother; in 2010, she won a Best Supporting

Actress Oscar for her straight turn in Precious.

John Waters

The cult director has committed many portraits of his home town to film, from the surprise blockbuster Hairspray to the art world satire of Pecker and the rampaging domestic terrorists of Mondo Trasho.

Animal Collective

The noise-pop band were formed in Baltimore in 2003. Not only did they name their breakthrough album after an outdoor venue in Marvland. the Merriweather Post Pavilion, but in 2015, they debuted new music through the speakers of Baltimore-Washington International Airport.

Ta-Nehisi Coates

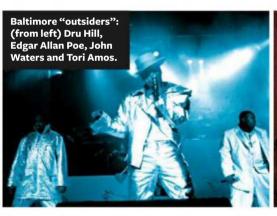
The journalist and author is best known for Between The World And Me, a book about growing up as a black man in America, written as a letter to his son. His first book The Beautiful Struggle is a memoir about his youth in Baltimore.

Tori Amos

Amos moved to Baltimore aged two. Her first ever single, Baltimore, released as a 7-inch when she was 16 under her middle name Ellen Amos, is a cheerful tribute to the city: "It's so nice to live here, I'm glad this is my home."

Jada Pinkett Smith

Pinkett Smith was born and raised in the city. While attending the Baltimore School For The Arts, the Nutty Professor/Girls Trip actor met classmate Tupac Shakur, and the two remained close friends until the rapper's death in 1996.





he choice of title has numerological connotations, and to many religions, seven is a sacred number. It got its hooks into Beach House early on. "It was captivating. It could hold a lot of possibilities, and with any title, we've always been looking for something that can reflect and hold a lot," Legrand says. "And we tried to get away from it, but words started feeling really weird." It was the first time they'd used a number for a title, and it will probably be the last, but they did everything differently this time to shake themselves up. They built a small studio in their practice space, a vast mystery cave in an old warehouse building that's filled with synths and drum machines, foraged from thrift stores, which Scally shows off with puppyish excitement, from a chunky '80s boombox with

a mini keyboard on top of it to a pink Barbie karaoke machine, kept around because of its unusual reverb. Some have made it onto albums, while others are still waiting in the wings.

That way, they could record songs whenever they were excited

enough about them, and keep the momentum charging ahead, rather than waiting until an album's worth was written, when some of the songs might be a year old or more. For Legrand, "every record is chasing a force field. Once you feel like this force field is caught, then you know you're done, for that time." The pair wrote Dive, the second single they released from 7, which is urgent and propulsive, at the very end of the process. "I felt like once Dive had been written, it was so left-field in terms of what we were expecting to happen, that it felt like a gift," she adds. Scally points out that he tried to keep writing more songs, but Legrand insisted that with Dive, they were done. "I believe in not trying to be insatiable or greedy," she smiles.

The band's sound has certainly been reinvigorated. "I think from the title to the visualisers, we felt a ton of energy from the music," Legrand says, "and we were following that the whole time. There's something about this record that just had that force in it. It just felt more edgy."

For the song Dark Spring, Beach House released a weird and wild video that initially looks as if it's documenting a burglary, but transforms into something far stranger, part '50s sci-fi B-movie,

part pagan ritual. The visual references for 7 are strictly monochrome, from the videos to the artwork. Its sleeve is a black and white collage of a torn-up woman's face. It was meant to be a kind of Edie Sedgwick type, a nod to Warhol's Factory and the dense-eyelashed ingenues of the '60s and '70s, but Legrand is pleased that you can read other faces into it, too. For some reason, she had a particularly strong aesthetic in mind for this album. "I had a lot of visual inspiration. It's sort of like punk, in the past, and a little bit of, not sci-fi, but some elements of an undetermined future, combined. And choosing 7 as the title is a huge part of that."

Inevitably, the political climate in which 7 was forged bled into its sound and lyrics. "Politics are

decorum and decency," shrugs Legrand. The next weekend, the pair will head to nearby Washington DC to attend the March For Our Lives, which will demand gun control, and they're amazed at the high school students leading the movement. "We did grow up in a time where we were told there wasn't much we could do. It was weird, powerless, 'protests don't work'," says Legrand. "These kids are young enough where they're like, well, there's no other fucking option."

It seems obvious to them that 7 would be a political record.

As artists, they say they're "antennae" for the world around them, and the world around them is increasingly insane. "But we've always been hesitant to bring up politics," says Scally. "Because it's as if there's one reality that is 'politics', and one reality that is 'everything else'. As if there's a line where all the political records exist in the world, as if David Bowie is not political, as if everything's not political. We've been facing a deep and horrifying energy field for some time, and it's a huge part of reality right now. That's all we wanted to say."

> ne of Baltimore's most uniquely Baltimore institutions is its American Visionary Art Museum, a gallery that houses outsider art, made by people in prison, people in institutions, people who claim psychic abilities. The museum's gift shop is filled with unusual trinkets, and stickers and mugs with the slogan, "Baltimore: there's more than murder here!" "The outsider thing is kind of a tradition in Baltimore,"

Scally explains, smiling. "It's never been a big city, it's never been a big scene. John Waters... The whole energy field is not even underdog, it's sub-underdog." Waters, the Pope of Trash, or Prince of Puke, depending on your persuasion, is the city's most famous export, and the director has become a friend to the band; they see him for dinner every now and then, and act as his "youth spies", telling him what's going on.

Late in the evening, Scally and Legrand head out into the cold, to see some local bands play at a venue, The Crown. The Crown was once a Korean restaurant, and it's been turned into a kind of ramshackle DIY warehouse space where it feels like anything could happen. They're looking forward to taking Beach House out on the road again, to playing live themselves; they've "rewritten" their show from scratch for the first time since the Teen Dream era. "No aspect of the past is getting carried forward," says Scally, clearly excited by the prospect. 7 is about starting over, in every way.



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Over two albums and four years, London's Wolf Alice have grown into an act with global potential, the best of their generation. Laura Barton joins them on the road in Bangalore, Manchester and LA to witness a band balanced thrillingly on the very precipice of greatness. "It could still be taken away from us very easily," they tell her, warily. Photographs: Alex Lake







he afternoon heat is rising in Bangalore, a haze of car horns and dust. A short walk away from the clamour of the main street, past the crates of flurrying chickens, and the stalls piled high with green coconuts, and the women ferociously sweeping their front steps, and the chai sellers and the stray dogs and the motorcycles that come beep-beeping and zig-zagging through the crowds - Wolf Alice are in the midst of a photo shoot.

They are an incongruous sight, as perhaps any group

"There aren't many

groups prefixed

'male-fronted rock

band', are there?"

Joff Oddie

of four young Westerners might be on the backstreets of a busy Indian city. But there is something more. There, in the surety of their gait, the cut of their clothing, the easy way they find their angles for the camera, that gives them the determined and distinctive air of a rock band.

The first time I met Wolf Alice was in the spring of 2014, just a year after the band had finalised their line-up and released their first single. That lunchtime they piled into a greasy spoon on the Holloway Road in North London for a New To Q interview: guitarist Joff Oddie, bassist Theo Ellis and drummer Joel Amey sat crammed around a small table, eager and exuberant; singer Ellie Rowsell arrived a little late, and for a moment stood by the door, looking wary. What was

striking about them then was the collision of their sartorial styles, as if they were not so much a cohesive unit but four musicians thrown together by strange circumstance.

In the four years since, Wolf Alice have become not only stylistically unified but also musically formidable, and now stand as that quite thrilling prospect: a young British band with the potential to achieve global success. Two albums deep, they have enjoyed Grammy and Brit nominations, sold out London's Brixton Academy and Alexandra Palace, and been the subject of a film by Michael Winterbottom. With the summer festival season now lying open before them, including

a headline slot on the Radio 1 stage at Reading/Leeds, it seems perfectly reasonable to wonder just how big this band might get.

"I think it could very easily still be taken away from us," says Oddie, smoking a cigarette by the hotel's rooftop pool the following afternoon. "Very easily." Still, for a band that cut its teeth sleeping on



Flash back: Wolf Alice's first appearance in Q, July 2014.

floors as it toured the UK, he seems quite comfortable in the environs of a swish hotel. "You grow up and you get a bit softer," he concedes. "You start liking the plush things. If we were on tour like Fugazi, four people sharing a hotel room after 20 years, I think I'd personally go absolutely bonkers."

Wolf Alice are here in India this weekend to play the Backdoors festival in aid of Amnesty International, making the most of a stop on the way home from the juggernauting multi-city Laneway festival in Australia. The previous evening they attended a festival showcase at a bar in the city populated by its young, rich and beautiful. Rowsell, Oddie and Ellis milled awkwardly between the rooms before Amey arrived, sharply dressed, and stood drinking mugs of tea and watching the cricket on the big screen behind the bar.

n the beginning Wolf Alice were a duo, made up of Oddie, who had grown up in rural Cornwall and trained as a primary school teacher, and North Londoner Rowsell.

Rowsell had played music from a young age, initially in a traditional Irish troupe named Meitheal Cheoil, as well as the Islington Community Choir. There was a moment she recalls "watching another girl sing a song at a ceilidh called Do You Love An Apple?" that proved particularly resonant. "I suppose if a song that inspires you is a technically difficult composition sung by a group of older men, for example, then you might feel

too intimidated to try your hand at such a thing yourself," she reasons. "If it's a simple song sung by a 13-year-old girl accompanied by nothing at all, then you might feel differently." She met Oddie via an internet forum in 2010, when she was keen to play live but too

nervous to do so alone. Those early open-mic shows were more acoustic-led, and by their own admission more twee. The addition of Amey and Ellis, both already fixtures on the London scene at a time when, Oddie recalls, "I didn't even know what the scene was", enhanced both their sound and their image.

If they look back now, over all the tours playing to "one person in Coventry", the rehearsal spaces booked by the hour, the gathering attention, record sales, award nominations, and the long stretch recording in Los Angeles, their progress seems hardearned but nonetheless striking.

"I think Ellie's definitely growing in confidence as a songwriter," Oddie says. "And that sounds like a stupid, throwaway obvious thing to say, but I think she's maybe getting to a point where she understands how good she is. We've grown a hell of a lot in confidence playing live as well. If you'd seen us in the early days, me and Ellie, and Ellie looking at the ground... and now she's fucking brutal."

"It is wild, actually," agrees Amey, joining us by the pool. "I have this really good mental snapshot of Ellie in Brisbane, being on the front row with fucking loads of people clambering up to her, and she's there with her guitar in a classic fucking pose and I thought, 'Shit, she never would've done that before!' She's a very powerful person."

Rowsell's power is a delicate balance of restraint and release, and is central to the force of Wolf Alice. Onstage this balance is amplified, a measure of fragility and unleashed ferocity. In person she looks something like a fine line drawing, and has the type of face that the light seems constantly to shift across: scowl giving way to sudden lustre and back again. The previous evening she went striding through the market in a long floral dress, just translucent enough to suggest the demure underwear beneath. She wore black Doc Martens, and walked with an out-turned step, seemingly oblivious – or perhaps grown accustomed – to the eyes that followed her.

It is strange, Oddie says, to find their band is always "prefixed as a 'female-fronted' rock band." He smiles. "There aren't many bands









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prefixed 'male-fronted rock band', are there?" Amey, too, has noticed the fascination a female singer can draw: "From day one I was always wary of dudes who would get really close to Ellie at the front of our pub gigs. And I'd see them again in London at other female-fronted bands' gigs. And you realise when you go to a festival that there's actually a culture for it, guys who like girls in bands."

But it was the response to the release of last year's single Yuk Foo that startled them most. A visceral, expletive-ridden song of boredom and rage and lust, it expressed a desire to "fuck all the people I meet" and was perhaps a touch abrasive for those fans who regarded Rowsell as a delicate, melancholy creature. "I think there was a lot of shock because a lot of people saw me as being very shy and very reserved and very innocent," she explains patiently. "And that whole idea was ruined for them. I get it, but I don't.

"Music gives me the freedom to express the many people I no longer am, never was or never will be," she continues. "I am a little shy – though not as much as everyone makes me out to be – and this would be restricting for me if I didn't have music as an outlet, where I can rage, perform and talk about all the things I don't know how to say in real life. I feel liberated when I'm writing and when I'm performing."

"That fucking annoyed the shit out of me," says Amey. "It starts with education because a lot of men – and it is men – can't cope with difference. It bothered me that people maybe thought she wasn't being intelligent in what she was saying. I find that insulting on every single level. The lyrics, they're actually my favourite lyrics on the album." Oddie agrees. "I also think a lot of female artists who've used lyrics like [those in Yuk Foo] in the past have, to a certain extent, had to become masculinised to be able to say them," he says. "There's something very powerful about someone feminine saying, 'I want to fuck all the people I meet."

Oddie is the more sober member of the band. He sits down for our interview still carrying a philosophy textbook – while still on tour he has embarked upon a course with a view to one day doing a second degree in philosophy, politics and economics. "It is a little bit difficult, living and working in your job and your art and your hobby









"It's the ghost of Johnny Borrell!" Joel Amey is a vision in white, as Ellis and Rowsell play some pre-gig ping-pong at the Backdoors festival.

altogether," he explains. "I remember watching a documentary on Philip Larkin and he said that he could only do poetry for a couple of hours a day, which was why he worked in Hull University library while he was Poet Laureate. And I thought that was really interesting. I do need a little bit of space from it all just to have another focus.

"I get terrified by the idea of arrested development, and it could happen in these situations if you're not careful," he continues. "Economics is interesting. I think a lot of people on the Left, a lot of people in my circle of family and friends, have a lot of views on economics and policy but don't actually know that much about it. But it has so much to do with inequality that I thought it would be interesting to get a proper grasp of the theories behind it."

Wolf Alice are notably a politically engaged band. They supported Jeremy Corbyn in the 2017 general election (Corbyn returned the favour by encouraging his Twitter followers to buy their album Visions Of A Life) and collaborated with Help Refugees UK to stage Bands 4 Refugees in late 2016. In Bangalore they visit the Amnesty offices to hear about the charity's work in the region, and the day after

their return they are due to head to Manchester for a War Child show. "I come from a very namby-pamby Lefty family so all of these things were talked about a lot when I was a kid," Oddie says. "But I think we're really lucky that all four of us share a similar political attitude. It would be a different conversation if Joel were a Tory or something."

They are aware, however, that financial success often brings a change in values. "It's always so disappointing when you see these people who've made so much money being creative and on the reliance of other people supporting them," says Amey, leaning back in his seat. "Stadium rock bands who rely on 80,000 people saving up their money to come and see them and buy their CD, but they don't give anything back. But I think you're dodging being a proper human being if you're choosing to invest in strange schemes across the globe, rather than pay back into a healthcare system."

"It's hard, though," says Oddie, "because you put so much trust in the people that you work with and that you employ to look after some of your affairs. Being in a band is a strange thing where you're the owner of the business, but the main focus isn't necessarily making



"Music gives me the freedom to express the many people I no longer am, never was or never will be."

Ellie Rowsell

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says 'morale officer'" Rowsell tells me. "You couldn't put it better. Obviously he's a really good bass player too, but he does create a constant good atmosphere."

"Sorry, Q magazine," announces Amey, "I'm going to take my trousers off." He takes a pair of cropped white jeans out of a small green rucksack and puts them on, then stands, shoeless in white socks, drumming on the trestle table with white drumsticks. A few moments later, Jai, the band's Indian fixer, walks in. "What's

the matter, Jai?" asks Amey. "You look like you've seen a ghost." Ellis smiles. "He's seen you. The ghost of Johnny Borrell!" Amey laughs. "I'm the ghost of 2007! I'm the ghost with the golden touch!" he sings.

Amey and Ellis often seem to act like each other's sidekick. During the show tonight, played to a crowd of perhaps a thousand enthusiastic young people assembled on a sports field, there was a constant thread between them. It's a stunning show – at times poised, then furious, then charged with a stadium-worthy enormity. Later I will notice that most of my notes are about Rowsell – how she sits on the edge of the stage for Don't Delete The Kisses, how as she plays her guitar seems as angular as she is, as if it has joined her long, pale limbs.

At the aftershow, back up by the hotel pool, Amey and Ellis seem to form the centre of the storm. Amey, Oddie says, is "intolerably musical. He can sing and play drums, every instrument, he knew about every band." Amey himself is more self-deprecating. He was, he says, "a fairly stereotypical fat, angry teenager listening to fat, angry teenager music" and growing up in Surrey until he discovered The Horrors, and London, and a world of music beyond. He is lean now, an immaculately presented rock star in tight vest and flowing hair, and the anger has dissipated to leave something kinder and more open. "But I still don't have any real personal interests," he says. "Not to sound boring, but everything follows after music."

And so it proves. With the next day off, the band are dedicated to the night ahead, and the party is gathering pace – beer, a barbecue, Anderson .Paak's gang on the decks, somewhere over the crowd and the canapés Danny Goffey deep in conversation. Across the table, I see Rowsell's face has taken on a new and mischievous gleam.

money. So there's a strange conflict there. And I think people can fall foul of not keeping an eye on their affairs as they should."

Aside from pop stars with off-shore bank accounts, they find much to be concerned about. "I do feel upset and angry about the way the older generation has left the world for younger generations," says Ellis. "But I think it's exciting that other people feel angry about it and there's a concerted effort by the younger generation who say, 'We don't have stuff because you fucked it up." And while Rowsell points out that their lyrics are not overtly political, there is something in their sound and their stance that speaks of disenchanted times. "I think that we've put ourselves out there a bit," she says. "I honestly believe that if you feel something you should do something and it almost doesn't matter how much you do if someone sees you doing it, and it inspires them."

n Wolf Alice's dressing room at the Backdoors festival there is a rising air of giddiness – much pre-show pacing across the floor, beers, outfit changes and clambering over one another like puppies. A stick of incense sits in a Coke can on the floor. "Ohhhh," groans Ellis, who has resumed pacing, eager to take to the stage. "Hurry up! I hate this!" He then opens another beer and starts singing The Lion Sleeps Tonight...

Ellis is the ringmaster here. Tall and skin-headed in high-waisted trousers, at times he has the air of a physical comedian and there is an inherent goodwill to

his demeanour. "I always find it funny that in Theo's Twitter byline it



"A lot of female artists who've used lyrics like *[those in]* Yuk Foo have had to become masculinised. It's powerful when someone feminine says, 'I want to fuck all the people I meet.'" Joff Oddie

couple of days later the band are in
Manchester, ready to play their live-streamed
War Child show at Gorilla. With home and
a three-week break in sight, they are restless
today. When they landed at Heathrow the
previous night it was grey and rainy, though
not unpleasant. This is, after all, the band that
once found themselves so homesick on a tour
of America that they consoled themselves
by watching John Smith's bitter adverts. Ellis
talks of the "tunnel vision" he develops at
the end of tour and is desperate to get home; of wanting to get a dog,
wondering whether he'll ever buy a house, of his girlfriend in London
and of how "it's horrible, making someone sit and wait for you."

Tomorrow they will head straight from Manchester to the Brit Awards, where they are nominated for Best British Group, up against Gorillaz, London Grammar, Royal Blood and The xx.

"We don't expect to win," says Rowsell, correctly (they don't).

"But when I look at the line-up I do feel proud of ourselves because we're quite different." Awards ceremonies are never quite what you imagine, she ponders. "You know, no one will invite us to their afterparty," she says. "They're 'trying' to get us tickets and you're not allowed to bring a guest... that kind of thing is strange. Last time there was a red carpet into the afterparty, and they said to us, 'Sorry, can you go round the back?' because there were some models or some celebrities arriving. Somehow we always end up at the Hawley Arms."

You can't help but feel that those days must be changing for Wolf Alice – that they are now a mature, evolved British group, capable of writing an album that warrants these accolades. "I don't think the new songs are better, but I hear the maturity," Rowsell says. "There's been a lot of things I've always done but I stifled before..." She chooses as an analogy her first day at school: "We didn't have a uniform so I thought, 'What I should wear?' I went to [futuristic fashion outlet] Cyberdog in Camden and bought some pedal pushers with luminous green stripes down them and a T-shirt with an alien on. I went to school and everyone laughed at me and I realised, 'OK, I understand, I can't wear

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that.' But then later I thought I'd have been so cool if I'd just worn what I wanted to wear. It's the same with making music. I feel this album is a return - slightly and slowly - to what I was naturally."

y late March Wolf Alice have reached LA. At the Mayan theatre downtown the teenage girls have set up camp outside, while the band are in the belly of the building, contemplating the lunchtime offerings of the rider. They talk of how they failed to win a Brit Award, and the speech they wrote just in case they did win, but that then got lost somewhere at an afterparty and how they have been living in fear ever since

of someone finding it.

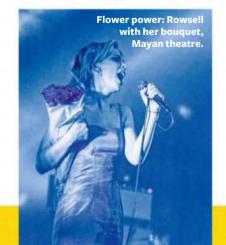
They talk of the time off that went too swiftly, of writing and recording new songs, and of the support tour with Queens Of The Stone Age, which will begin imminently and has left Ellis with the conundrum of how to cover the QOTSA tattoo on his arm, lest he look like a fawning fanboy.

The Mayan show is something of a homecoming. It was after all in LA that they recorded Visions Of A Life, and they will be reunited with the friends they met while living out in Eagle Rock. Their success in the US began early (single Moaning Lisa Smile went

Top 10 on the Billboard Alternative Songs chart) and has been gathering since. "I think we translate more easily in America than some British bands have done," Amey says. "We're not as colloquial as Arctic Monkeys..." But he feels frustrated by tours in America. "Live music's a different entity [over there]," he explains. "It's great, but a lot of venues are only 21+ and I feel like a lot of kids only get to experience a band when they're playing a massive venue that can accommodate their age group." His own experience was quite different, he says. "I remember being 15 and watching The Horrors at a tiny venue thinking, 'This is going to change everything I'm going to do now.' Not just because of the band but because of the atmosphere and the way people looked. It was a mind-blowing experience. It's such a shame if people have to wait till they're older, because it's such

> an important part of your life, and you're a different person by the time you're 18 or 21."

When they take to the stage tonight there are enough young faces, upturned and rapturous, to remind you that mind-blowing experiences can happen at any age. It's during the unabashedly romantic Don't Delete The Kisses that a fan hands Rowsell a bouquet of red roses, and I think back on our conversations about what it is for a woman to lead a rock band. In some lights perhaps it might seem creepy, or strange, or fetishistic, but tonight it seems something more reverent: a tribute, an offering, to rock's next great frontwoman.



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PRESENTS

THE WOLF ALICE COLLECTOR'S EDITION!

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The package itself features a beautifully produced AA-sided 7-inch single on black vinyl featuring Space & Time/
Formidable Cool and is housed in a specially produced sleeve (see above). The set also includes a unique edition of Q

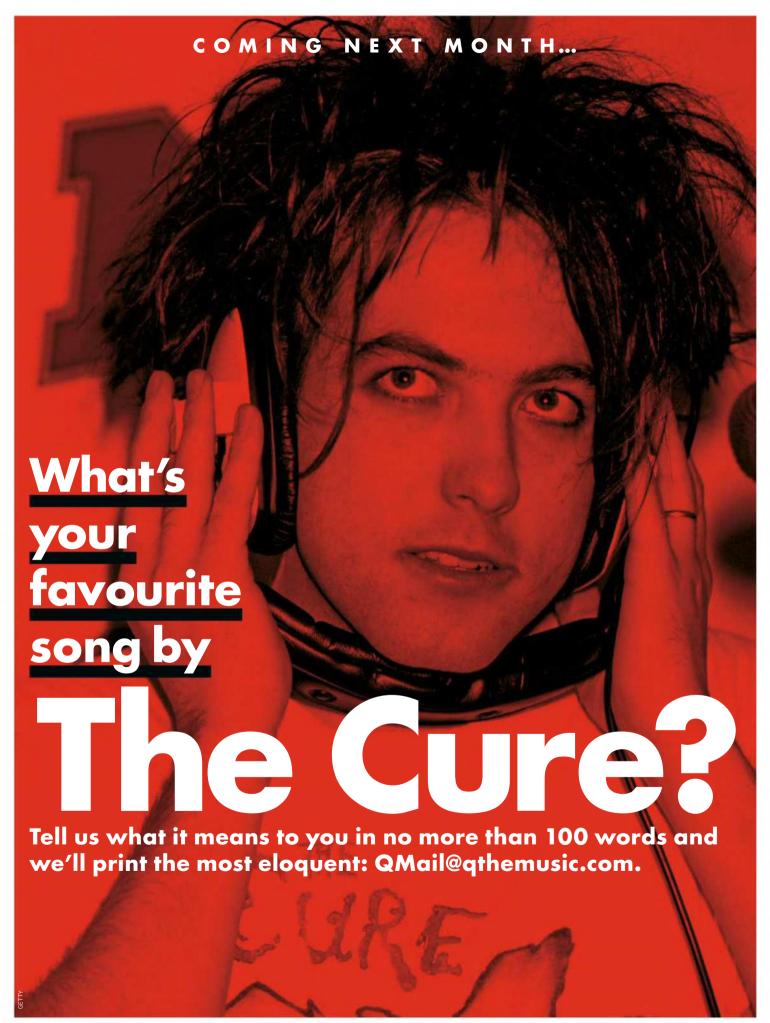
that features an exclusive coverline-free cover designed by Wolf Alice themselves (also above).

There are a mere 3000 copies of this 7-inch-and-magazine extravaganza up for sale, meaning that this copy of Q is

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All will be revealed in the next issue of Q. Out 5 June.





By Massive Attack

In April 1998, Massive Attack released their third classic album, Mezzanine, the follow-up to the era-defining Blue Lines and Protection. But as Rupert Howe reveals in this oral history of its two-year gestation, internal strife meant the record very nearly didn't appear.



hen Massive Attack first entered **Bristol's Christchurch Studios in** January 1996 to start work on their new album – the follow-up to Blue Lines (1991) and Protection (1994) - the plan was to have it

recorded within six months and out by the summer. As it turned out, Mezzanine's fraught sessions went on for nearly two years, exposing long-simmering internal tensions and almost splitting the band.

idge (co-producer): Mezzanine was a pretty sketchy album in terms of the way we worked, because the band... were not getting on. So I'd be in the studio working with one of the members and someone else would come in, then the person I had been working with would leave and I'd have to change the track I was working on because they didn't want to work on that track, they wanted to work on something different. Sometimes I'd be working on perhaps four different tracks in one day, which was a pretty messy way to work.

producer): I went in there a bit fucking heavy, a bit pig-headed. I was sampling loads of ridiculous things, which were never going to work, like Stiff Little Fingers and 999. But I was trying to break the mould.



Neil Davidge: They'd had a lot of commercial success... but they were still very much a new band, still learning about how to be a band, what a band is actually about.

Daddy G (vocalist/producer): There weren't too many occasions where we were all in the studio at the same time. We just got sick of each other. We get on really well outside of the studio, but in the studio... There was a lot of shouting that went on behind closed doors.

Angelo Bruschini (guitarist): Most of the songs were still in a blueprint form six, seven months down the line. Nobody knew how the hell it was going to happen - nobody.

3D: We never had a band meeting and said, "We've got to dirty things up." But, personally, I was on a bit of a mission to get away from the clean sound of Protection and spoke at length to Daddy G about bringing in more guitars.

Daddy G: /We / nick from anything and make a nice little collage. The Tarantino method. But you still have to have vision and imagination.

3D: The beats *[for Inertia Creeps]* came from Istanbul. We went to a belly dancer show on our day off in this really tacky tourist club. It was a cabaret thing; this guy did a version of New York, New York with his cane and hat. Then the belly dancers came on and they'd all seen better days. It really was hanging, but the music was wicked. Mush went and got some tapes the next day.

Neil Davidge: We really did take a lot of liberties. Angelo /Bruschini / would come into the studio after doing a long session the day before, and say, "Wow, that sounds good what's that?" I'd say, "That's you, mate."

Mushroom (producer): If I'd had it my way? It would have been more soul-orientated more like Blue Lines. It would've been much more of a black-sounding album with hiphop influences, too. It came out kinda rocky.

3D: I was really keen to get in some of the new wave stuff. I felt we'd really missed out on using that influence. Everybody working in Bristol now has some connection to that period. I remember fucking about with Lunatic Fringe, a punk band in Bristol, performing Anarchy In The UK in Sefton Park youth club where Roni Size was working. There's a core of that whole punk-reggae connection in Bristol.

Mushroom: I was never down with punk. Punks and psychobillies and skinheads were pretty much the same thing to me.



3D (vocalist, producer): Robert Del Naja, former street artist and member of Bristol DJ collective

The Wild Bunch. Generally known by his graffiti tag "3D", or simply "D".



Daddy G (vocalist, producer): **Grant Mitchell, also** a former member of The Wild Bunch. Now sole surviving founder member of



Mushroom (producer): **Andrew Vowles, former** DJ with The Wild Bunch. Left the group in 1999

after continuing disagreements with his two bandmates.

Massive Attack alongside 3D.



Neil Davidge (co-producer): **Bristol-based producer** who first worked with Massive Attack on

a remix of Karmacoma for 1995 charity record, the Help album.



Angelo Bruschini (guitarist): Former member of Bristol band The Blue **Aeroplanes and Massive**

Attack collaborator since Protection.



Horace Andy (*vocalist*): Veteran reggae singer who has worked with the band since their debut

album, Blue Lines.



Liz Fraser (vocalist): **Former** singer with Cocteau Twins who recorded three songs for Mezzanine.



Will Self (writer): Met the band on several occasions and profiled them during the making of Mezzanine

for US magazine Details.



Tom Hingston (designer): London-based graphic designer who collaborated with Del Naja

and photographer Nick Knight to create Mezzanine's cover art.



Neil Davidge: Mushroom felt like he had an attachment to Teardrop, because the other guys weren't around when we were first putting down the essential melodic ideas for that. We got Liz /Fraser / to put a vocal down on it; she came up with an early version of what's there now.

3D: The closest we ever got to working with Jeff Buckley was Teardrop /Liz Fraser recorded her vocal the day she heard of her former collaborator's disappearance]. We were writing that about him, which was very sad because at the time we were circling him like vultures hoping to get in the studio with him.

Liz Fraser (vocalist): That was so weird. I'd got letters out and I was thinking about /Jeff Buckley]. That song's kind of about him – that's how it feels to me anyway.

3D: Liz is very excitable and quite mad in the best way. She threw a million words into the air and we tried to grab a few and work out what she meant. Me and Mush met her in Sainsbury's and invited her up to the studio. There was this nerve-wracking moment before she arrived and I said, "It's really sterile in here, let's light some candles in here and make it funky for her."

Neil Davidge: It was great, everyone was loving it, except for Mushroom - he had a very fixed idea of what the vocal should be on that track, and it wasn't what Liz was doing / Mushroom then allegedly sent the





"We were writing Teardrop about Jeff Buckley, which was very sad because at the time we were circling him like vultures hoping to get in the studio with him."

backing track to Madonna]. I got a phone call from management saying, "I've just had a phone call from Madonna's manager, saying there's a track that she's been sent that she loves, and she's wondering what's the deal?" The shit hit the fan then.

Mushroom: You just hear a piece of music and think, "So-and-so would sound good on this." It just makes itself apparent to you. It's like deciding what clothes to wear.

3D: Me and G were obviously really unhappy about the situation. It was at a point where, after a lot of meandering, the album was finally starting to develop. There were seven or eight tracks happening which were really sounding like they made a lot of sense.

Neil Davidge: I think it almost came to blows. From that point onwards, Mushroom and D weren't in the studio at the same time. If Mushroom was in the studio when D was going to come in, I'd get a phone call saying, "Could you tell Mushroom to leave?"

Daddy G: Things are never really disposed of because you're at such close quarters all the time. The same stuff crops up over and over

again and you think, "Shouldn't we have got that out in the open a long time ago?"

3D: There was a period where it almost fell to bits. In Bristol we had all fallen out badly about what direction it should be going in and it really was looking likely that it wasn't going to happen. [To move the sessions along, the band hired an extra studio in Cornwall]. Going down to Cornwall – in shifts, I might add – made it work. We went in the winter, which I loved. The water's clear... it's great to hear the wind just banging on the window.

Neil Davidge: We were literally re-writing songs while we were mixing... Angel [was] plucked out of thin air at a mixing session at London's Olympic Studios [the original idea was to record a cover version of The Clash's Straight To Hell, but reggae singer Horace Andy wasn't happy singing the word "hell"]. D and Horace went next door, were kind of throwing vocal ideas around... and we were messing around with the track, chopping things together. Then Horace put the vocal down and it was like, "Wow, shit, that is magic..."

3D: Horace is great, really open-minded. It's difficult for him in a sense because he's got

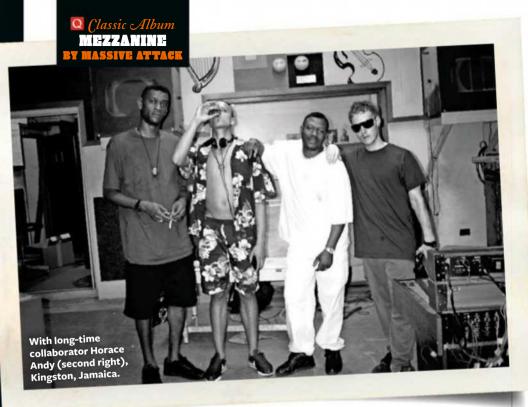
such a massive history and there's people who respect him in London and Jamaica who could be asking, "What happened to your reggae roots, Horace?" He's not worried about what people think of him even though he's had people dissing him for it. He's prepared to experiment with the rest of us.

Horace Andy (vocalist): I respect 3D one million per cent, because he let me sing in a way I never thought I could... I still tease them and say they can't deejay – get them in a studio and they will do it, but onstage you say, "Come up and deejay something like a Jamaican deejay would", and they run a mile. I probably shouldn't let this out on them, but they can't dance either – Daddy G and 3D will try to move, but I've never seen Mushroom take a step.

Mushroom: The record company... said, "Enough's enough. You've got to put the record out now."

3D: The title Mezzanine [was] pretty much a metaphor... We don't feel like we're in the same time zone as other people. It's the feeling of not really fitting in. It's a bit paranoid and a bit isolated.

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Daddy G: The mezzanine? I think D spends half his life there. I don't think he knows whether he's coming or going.

3D: We did toy with the idea of calling it Damaged Goods for a while. It seemed to sum up a lot of the ideas that were going on. But it felt too obvious in the end.

Will Self (writer): Sometimes when I'm with the Massives I feel I'm with three versions of John Lennon, each one of them determined to outdo himself in terms of wit. It's simultaneously maddening and invigorating. It's the same kind of interplay that you experience when you hear the three of them merge rapping, toasting, singing and percussion into their music.

Daddy G: We're not an architectural band. It's never been that we map something out and play it. Instead, it's trying to translate something in your head, but to get it from there to paper to tape - there's always that grey area. That's where it can be quite exciting, where accidents happen. It also makes it so there's no restriction to what we do - we got the right to break down and let chaos rule.

3D: /For the cover / I wanted to go for something more photographic. I started off with images of spiders. I was really obsessed, having mad dreams about them; I wanted a spider's abdomen on the back of the album cover and I wanted to develop this idea of making clothes from spider skin. It was all very trippy shit that proved quite difficult to make it into anything, but then [photographer] Nick Knight showed me these shots of beetles that he'd taken in the Natural History Museum. They were really beautiful. That kind of settled it.

Tom Hingston (designer):

A friend of mine is pals with their manager. And he basically said, "Well... they're finishing off their album, and starting

to think about artwork." Prior to that they'd always worked with much bigger design studios, and I think that what 3D wanted was to have a bit more of a one-to-one relationship.

3D: I was very keen on keeping [the album sleeve] in monochrome. Me and Tom wanted a lurid orange disc inside - one piece of colour. At this point we'd given in to the idea that the main format was a CD, so we wanted to make the CD format really striking. I wanted to take a more aggressive approach... with the sleeve, to almost go back to a black and white, fuckedup aesthetic but with brand new materials, which is what we did. There's also a bit of JG Ballard to it, sexual dark undertones, which was definitely in the record.

Angelo Bruschini: They were very, very nervous /before the release of the album's first single, Risingson 7. There was a big sigh of relief when that sold.

Daddy G: About six months before the album came out, D said to me, "If this record doesn't go to Number 1, we

may as well forget it." He was right, I took that on board /the album went straight in at the top of the chart 7. If we didn't get any payback, it would have been a waste of time.

Neil Davidge: Mezzanine has that post-punk thing, has that reggae thing, has a little bit of funk, has almost a bit of jazz at times, a bit of prog-rock... it's a real mixture of all of the influences from members of the band.

Daddy G: You sometimes hear these blatant rip-offs [of our sound] and think, "You fucking bastards!" But at the end of the day we've taken inspiration from other things as well... We've never tried to sound like anyone else, but we've taken inspiration from other bands. The thing is, we're not in competition with anyone else, we're

just in competition with ourselves.

3D: We've not deliberately been in opposition to every trend and scene, but when Blue Lines came out it was like the

Summer of fucking Love and we were doing something slow and groovy. Then when Protection came out everyone was doing drum'n'bass, and when Mezzanine came about we went into a more rockoriented place when everyone else was bang into dance music. It's always by accident with us, really.

Mushroom: There was one journalist cheeky enough to call /Mezzanine 7"goth hop". Fuckin' ridiculous...

Will Self: Massive Attack have never viewed themselves as being anything but entirely sui generis. Which makes it all the stranger the trajectory their music has described... theirs struck me as an essentially subversive sound, vitally connected to the sexual act and the derangement of the senses by any means available.

3D: People say our albums are dark and melancholic, but I say it's like Radiohead's OK Computer. It's quite tragic in places, but you don't leave the album feeling tragic. You feel enlightened.



Released: 20 April, 1998, Virgin Highest UK chart position:

> **Producers:** Neil Davidge, **Massive Attack**

> > Recorded: 1997-'98

Studios: **Massive Attack Studios and** Christchurch Studios, Bristol

Track Listing: 1 Angel

2 Risingson **3 Teardrop**

4 Inertia Creeps **5 Exchange**

6 Dissolved Girl 7 Man Next Door

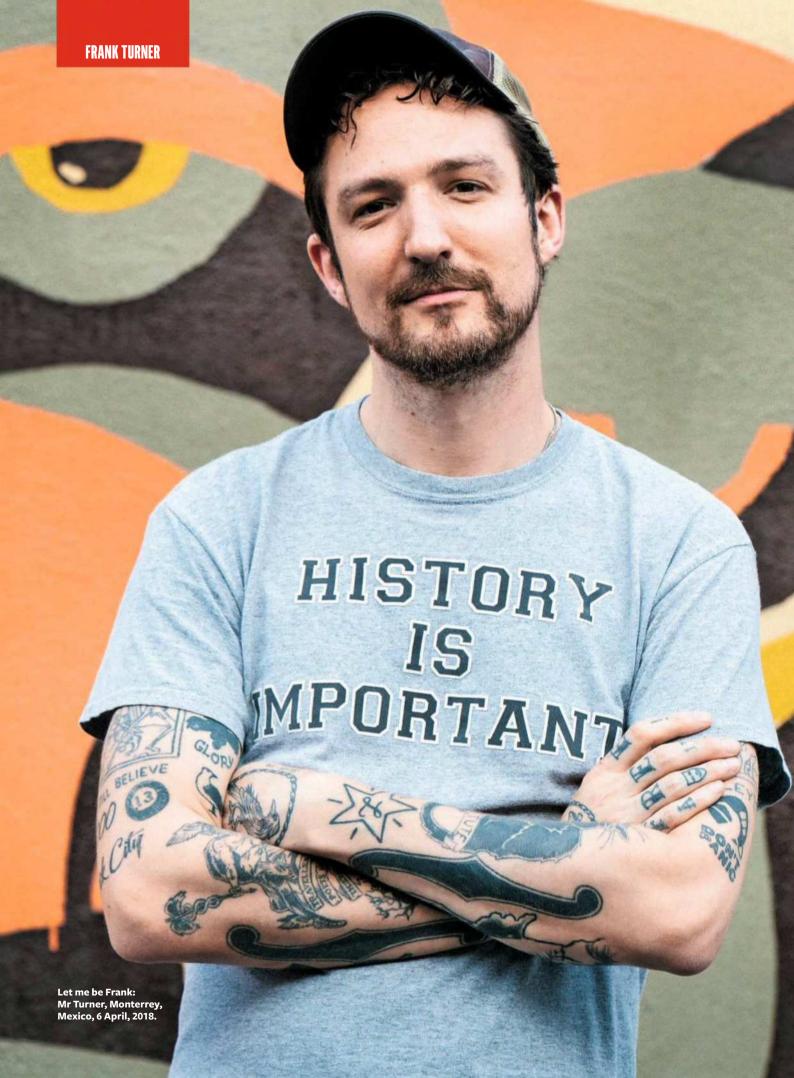
8 Black Milk

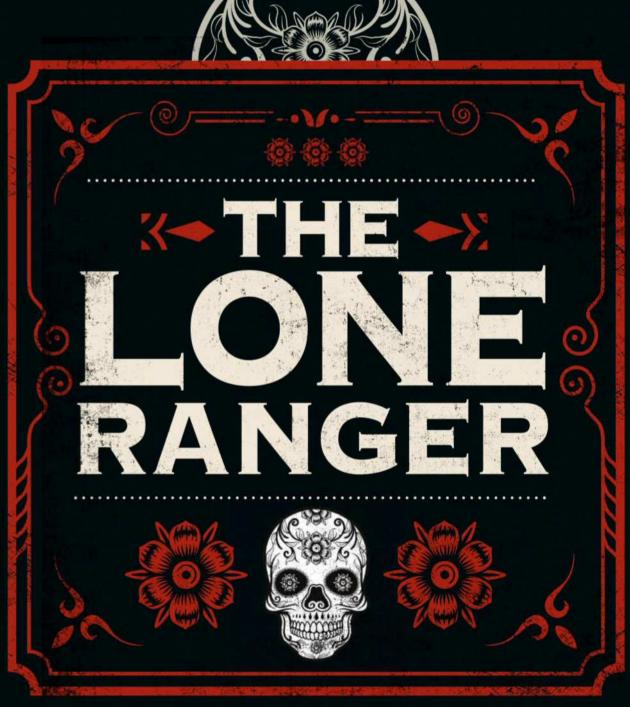
9 Mezzanine

10 Group Four 11 (Exchange)



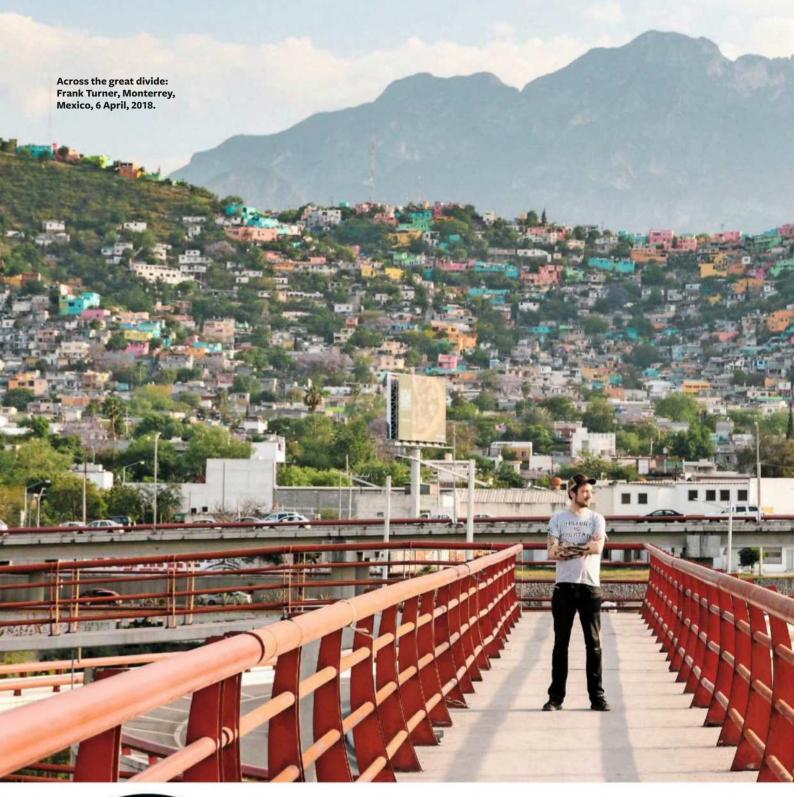


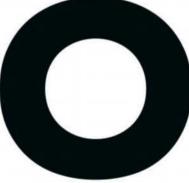




Folk-punk minstrel Frank Turner has a remarkable gift for drawing crowds into his world and joyfully uniting them. But you're either with him or against him, and his enemies like to let him know about it. Laura Barton joins him on tour in Mexico to hear about his gift and his curse.

PHOTOGRAPHS: RACHAEL WRIGH:





utside the Caradura bar in Mexico City, it has just started to rain: heavy, plump drops that land on the warm pavement and the jacaranda trees and the bright, up-turned faces of the Frank Turner fans who have gathered by the doorway ahead of his show.

Inside, Turner is midway through his soundcheck. His voice is a

gigantic, Rushmorean thing, filling the small, scruffy room as a woman quietly mops the floor and the barman shoulders in a large bag of ice. He runs through a version of the Scottish broadside ballad Barbara

Allen, then a track from his new album inspired by the New York blackout riots of 1978, and tries out an unreleased song about Mata Hari. Afterwards he sits in the curtained-off backstage area, writes out his setlist, and recalls an early gig in Basingstoke when the audience refused to let him leave the stage and so, with his own repertoire exhausted, he began playing Weezer covers before eventually resorting to Disney tunes. Anything to keep the crowd happy.

Turner, 36, is a curious anomaly of a rock star: a Hampshire-raised son of an investment banker who attended Eton and studied history at LSE before fronting hardcore punk band Million Dead, launching a strikingly successful folk-punk solo career and playing at the opening ceremony of the Olympics. His songs deal with unashamedly earnest, heartfelt matters - with politics, social injustice, love and redemption, and he inspires such furious devotion that his fans will happily fly in (as some have tonight) from Dubai and Ireland and America, to wait out for him in the early-evening rain.



Later, when he takes to the stage to warm choruses of "Frank! Frank!" it is as if he is returning that devotion. Despite raging jet lag (he flew in overnight and landed in the early hours) he will play for an hour and a half, then make small talk with promoters, photographers, support bands, and pause for pictures with every last straggling fan outside. "Technically speaking, this is the first night of the world tour," he tells the crowd three songs in, a gleam of sweat spreading up his neck and jaw, and the audience clambering on the banquettes. "And I feel like you guys are setting the bar pretty high for the rest of the world!" He swigs a beer, the crowd roar with pleasure, and he plays the title track of the new album, Be More Kind.

"I always try and hang out and say hello to people if I can," Turner says later. "Something I've tried to inculcate in my audience is the idea – and it's an ideologically motivated idea – that the people who play music shouldn't be removed from their audience." It's an idea that stems from the punk shows he saw as a teenager. "I vividly remember

"I had people sending my records back with 'Fuck You' written on them, people spitting at me in crowds. I'm not sure I thought my career was over, but I thought about not doing it any more."

going to see bands at the Red Eye in Islington, long-gone now, and when the first band finished playing they just came off the stage and got in the audience and the second band jumped up and started setting up," he recalls. "And it was this really visual demonstration of the fact that music was a conversation between a community."

Occasionally this can prove antagonistic. Turner keeps his email address on his website, and while 90 per cent of the messages he receives are "lovely and positive", there is still that nigglingly unpleasant 10 per cent. "I get some shitty emails here and there," he admits. "Someone sends you an email calling you seven shades of arsehole. Sometimes people talk about politics. A lot of the time they talk about having sold out punk rock in some sort of way by becoming successful. People will say, 'Oh, you've changed, man!' and want me to be the same person I was when I was 23. But I've learned that the best way to deal with the abusive beginnings of a conversation is to keep your cool and keep your manners."

In person, Turner has an air of determined affability, as if he will defeat all sceptics and naysayers through sheer force of his niceness. It was not always this way. I ask him to describe that 23-year-old those disgruntled emailers still pine for, and he laughs. "When I was 23 I was angrier, but in a slightly unfocused way," he says. "Which is very useful fuel for being in a hardcore band, but I also think I had quite a lot of promiscuous political positions when I was 23, or at least not particularly well thought out positions. Inconsiderate might be another way to put it."

Those political positions were in part a reaction to his upbringing. "Uh well, OK," he begins, and clears his throat, as if preparing for the inevitable examination of his past. "I was shipped off to boarding school when I was 13 – I passed a scholarship exam, I wasn't really entirely sure what I was doing and then I passed and my father's social aspirations were given a shot in the arm, so fuckin' A. And at Eton College," he says quickly, "I loved the education; in fact I'm still in touch with one or two of the teachers there, but I really hated the place, socially. There was a time when I would've said, 'Everybody else there was a c**t', but I'm old enough now to realise that's a dumb and unfair thing to say." Still, he felt alienated from the other students, aware, he says, that there was something "structurally unjust" in the school's very existence, and shocked by the realisation that "much of the snobbery was directed at the kind of people I hung out with back home."

He was, by his own measure, "full of hormones and furious with the world" and therefore a perfect audience for punk rock. Already a fan of Iron Maiden and Megadeth, he bought Never Mind The Bollocks and the first Clash album on the advice of a friend's uncle, and soon found his way to Descendents, Black Flag and Dead Kennedys. He would write off to No Idea and Initial Records for their catalogues, got into tape-trading with a couple of like-minded friends, and began spending more and more time away from his studies.

"I was helped by the fact I had a teacher who used to help me fake dentist appointments and shit to get out of school," he explains.

"So from the age of 16 I wasn't there very much – I'd go to London and go to gigs and the anarchist book fair." His parents despaired. "My dad was, and kind of still is, furious-slash-disappointed," Turner says. "I was not bred to be that way." Have relations not softened now that his son has proved such a success? Turner goes quite still. "He and I are estranged, shall I say," his voice is muted. "My issues with my father are not to do with social background, they're to do with his choices and behaviour." He clears his throat again. "And he and my mother are separated, long since. But they weren't when I was at school, and he kicked me out of the house regularly. Which was fine because I wasn't planning on going home for the holidays anyway – I'd go and stay in a squat in Tufnell Park and have a whale of a time and my mother would be heartbroken."

When he was 16, Turner formed a band called Kneejerk and went on his first UK tour, booked via the hardcore zine Fracture. "We found someone who was old enough to drive, we played two weeks of shows and I think our grand total of attendance was probably about 60. We had crusty punks beating the shit out of us in car parks, everyone got flu even though it was August, and we played 120 Rats, the squat in Leeds that got demolished the following day," he laughs gleefully. "It was madness! About 12 of us got in the van, and when we came back about six said, 'I'm never, ever doing that again'. And the other six of us were like, 'Yes, yes, MORE, immediately!"

Turner describes himself as having "run off and joined the circus" though arguably there might be something in the privilege of his background that allowed him the freedom to run; a degree of social and financial security that made such a grand adventure seem viable. "If you're talking about the politics of private education, the thing that I was taught at school was endless possibility," he agrees. "You could picture yourself in any role in life, and I've absolutely benefited from that and it would be ridiculous of me to deny that."

Still, it's not hard to picture him and his fellow Etonians walking into 120 Rats, say, and their being greeted with a degree of scepticism by their fellow punks and squatters. "Yeah, well we didn't advertise where we were from," Turner insists. "And I'm not sure that I ever sounded like a public schoolkid that much." But these things have a way of being communicated regardless, and when Kneejerk's public schooling was eventually revealed there was, he concedes, "some hostility". But to his surprise others rallied. "In a way that I thought was really fucking cool, quite a lot of people stood up and said, 'The point of punk rock is inclusivity, it's supposed to be a refuge," he says. "And that's why, despite everything, despite how

shitty and backstabby and hypocritical and awful and rejectionist and rude to me the punk scene can be, I will always fucking love it. Because it was my refuge when I was a kid."

Still, in 2005, following the acrimonious end of Million Dead, Turner took a different musical direction. Even before they split he was "getting a bit bored with angry, shouty, angular guitar music," he says. "I mean I still love it, but it can't be your only diet." He got into Josh Rouse, Neil Young, Bruce Springsteen, Ryan Adams and found particular revelation in Johnny Cash's American Recordings series. "I listened to them because they had NIN on it or whatever," he says. "But it was the first time it occurred to me that you could be heavy without necessarily taking your shirt off and screaming at the front row. So much of that stuff is insanely heavy and yet it's so restrained. I realised then that volume and intensity don't necessarily map onto each other all the time."



he next day we fly to Monterrey, where Turner has a support slot with the German band Milky Chance. We walk around the streets near the venue, past taco trucks and stray mariachi players, stand high up on the motorway bridge and admire the brightly painted houses clustering the hillside. Turner, I notice, is wearing a T-shirt that reads History Is

Important. "I am a history nerd," he says firmly. "I find it difficult to understand why anyone wouldn't be, because how can you interpret our world without knowing how it came to be? I just don't understand how anyone could take themselves seriously having a conversation about modern politics without having some understanding of history. It's just nonsensical to me."

Still, there have been moments in Turner's career when he himself has been accused of political ignorance. In 2012, The Guardian ran an article detailing some of the political opinions he had set out in previous interviews – describing himself as "pretty right wing" and the BNP as a "hard left party". The response was ferocious.

He talks about it readily now, but in a careful, measured tone, referring to it as "the Guardian bullshit" with a very slight straightening of his spine. "I've had it out with the journalist who wrote it and

I felt it was a pretty low-blow attempt at character assassination," he says. "There was some dog-whistle shit in that piece. But at the same time I was having a pissed conversation with a friend and phrased quite a lot of what I had to say badly."

What did he mean to say? "Well, I come from a musical scene in which the left is hugely prevalent, and I've always been more in the centre in my politics. Not when I was younger – then I was hard left, and I moved away from that. I am essentially a liberal, I believe that all human beings should be considered equally, and I'd like to build a society in which everybody has an equal opportunity to follow the course of their life in the way that they see fit. It's not really particularly radical shit."

The backlash that followed took some while to die down. "That piece came out and the reaction was pretty extreme for quite a while afterwards," he says. "I had people sending my records back with 'Fuck You' written on them, people spitting at me in





"A friend suggested that I'm trying to create my platonic ideal of a punk rock show. Fair cop. It's eternally welcoming, it's nonjudgemental, it's a place in which we leave our divisions at the door."

crowds. I'm not sure I thought my career was over, but I definitely thought about not doing it any more." He takes a slow sip of beer. "I think the thing that made me angriest was it made me really nervous about meeting my audience for a while. I got really, really nervous about going and saying hi to people after gigs, and that really pissed me off."

Still, Be More Kind is a largely political record. He will deny it claim the title, a line from a Clive James poem, is more an appeal for civility, point to songs such as There She Is, an unashamed tribute to his girlfriend. But there also references to the Pan-European Peace Picnic of 1989, and tracks such as Make America Great Again, a plea "for people who don't like Donald Trump - of which I am emphatically one - to find ways of having conversations with those who voted for him."

He is quite unafraid to reference such ideas in song. He explains about another upcoming project to write songs about historical

female figures who have been largely overlooked. There is, without question, a purity of intent. But are those really the stories for a white man of privilege to tell? And doesn't forcing such ideas into song run the risk of seeming heavy-handed?

"I was easily impressed by lyrical complexity when I was in punk rock," he says. "Listening back to them now, I can say I am proud of the /Million Dead / records we made, but it's clear that a lot of the lyrics were an attempt at intellectual bravado – like, 'Look how many books I've read and how many intellectual references I can shove into a song!"' He smiles. "We've got a song about Polish communism compared with GMTV... there was some showing-off going on."

Today he feels he writes differently. He is still in pursuit, he says, of "space and stillness" but what he seems proud of is the hope his songs offer, how they leave the listener with the lingering taste of positivity. "I do think you could say a development over my career is that I figured out things to be in favour of rather than against," he says.



Turner has never played Monterrey, and save for the straggle of fans outside, tonight's audience is an unknown quantity. As he steps out onto the stage, beneath the huge dome of the Rio cinema, I stand in the wings and look out: the fans have gathered in the front couple of rows, but there are many empty seats stretching up to the back of the room.

What happens next is quite remarkable. Over the course of his short set, Turner will perform the most spectacular feat of crowdconversion I have ever seen. He plays the old songs, he plays the new ones, he is bashful and charming, sings verses in Spanish, encourages them all to sing along to choruses they don't yet know. Toward the end they put their phone lights in the air, and from my position by the side of the stage I see that the seats are all now full: a thousand tiny lights twinkle back in the darkness, and the whole room is singing along.

On record, Turner's songs can sometimes feel a bit literal. Live, they undergo some kind of alchemy – they are still primary-coloured and simply-shaped, but now they become anthemic, resonant, urgent.

"A friend suggested that what I'm trying to do with my shows is to create my platonic ideal of a punk rock show, and fuck yeah, fair cop," he told me before the gig. "It's eternally welcoming, it's nonjudgemental, it's a place in which we leave our divisions and our troubles and our hatreds at the door. Of course it's utopian, and the world

cannot be saved by punk rock – I realised that a long fucking time ago – but if you can take a few hours to collectively come together, then..." He then hesitated. "Alain de Botton wrote this ridiculous article suggesting we should have atheist churches because there is a human need for communality, and I thought, 'This is a man who has never been to a good gig.'"

Back at the hotel, Turner is enlivened by the success of the show, and despite a 5:15am lobby call, suggests we all head to the bar. He downs a large shot of mezcal, nurses a beer, regales us with anecdotes





"In any given society you have manual workers, clerical workers, police forces... and entertainers. Our job is to lift the weight of the world a bit at the end of the working week."

from his guitar tech's stag do, and takes out his phone to show us embarrassing pictures of his teenage self. At some point I become dimly aware that we are another crowd in the process of conversion.

"I like describing myself as an entertainer," he said, earlier in the evening. "In any given society you have manual workers, clerical workers, police forces, and over there in the corner there are entertainers, and our job is just to lift the weight of the world a little bit at the end of the working week." He seemed happy with this idea of himself. "That's the pinnacle of my ambition in a way," he added, "and I think it's noble. You watch Chas & Dave's Christmas Knees-Up and it's just a bunch of people getting drunk and listening to Albert Lee play Country Boy. That's the good life to me."

The following afternoon we arrive at a festival in Guadalajara. It is 32 degrees, and at this hour, long before the headliners arrive, the festival is a broad stretch of lawn beneath a wild blue sky. The occasional punter dots the scene.

When Turner takes to the stage there is a surge. A small crowd gathers and then grows. Vendors walk among it selling cold drinks and shaved ice, but the audience keeps its attention on the stage.

Once again he is wooing them. The choruses rise and fall and they join in at his request, carried along by the spirit of it, quite caught up in

its joy. "Now who'd have thought that after all," they sing, "something so simple as rock'n'roll would save us all..."

After the cheers and applause Turner is swept off for interviews and a long meet-and-greet before he must hurry back to the airport for the long schlep to London. When I last see him he is sitting in the shade of the minibus and for the first time he looks drained by the demands of the last three days. I watch his van sail off and through the window I see a glimpse of his face, pale and weary, the noble entertainer, carrying the weight of the world.

SPECIAL LIVE EVENT with FRANK TURNER

THE MAKING OF ... BE MORE KIND

For information about tickets to a very special Q-hosted live event in London featuring Frank Turner in discussion about his latest album, visit Qthemusic.com from 10am on 10 May, 2018.





() *MAVERICI*

Celebrating the wildcards who've inspired cult worship

PHOTOGRAPHS MICHAEL CLEMENT

The singer-songwriter Neko Case overcame a challenging upbringing to forge a forceful, distinctive career. But it was while she recorded her latest LP in Stockholm that her world imploded. Could she survive this latest shock? Laura Snapes hears a tale of revelation and unbending resilience.

eko Case's

family loathed vanity. Her mother once caught her trying to

adjust her bandanna in the mirror and warned her, "Don't become vain." Case had made three albums before her beloved grandmother admitted that she had been a singer. The mentality stuck. But if Case took pride in one thing, it was her beautiful

1787 Vermont farmhouse.

In 2012, she welcomed America's Country Living magazine in for a photoshoot that detailed the paint, the tiling, the wooden beams juxtaposed with glowing marble, a capacious blue bath, 100 verdant acres, with views of both Vermont's Green Mountains and New Hampshire's White Mountains, for her farm animals to graze.

The next time Neko Case's house was in the news, it was

burning down. In September 2017, Case was in Stockholm recording her seventh album when she got a call from a local newspaper saying that her house was on fire, and would she comment? She denied that it was her house, and then multiple times on Twitter, before calling the paper back in "an expletiveladen phone call", per its report, "insisting that the paper's online story be taken down because she didn't want her address

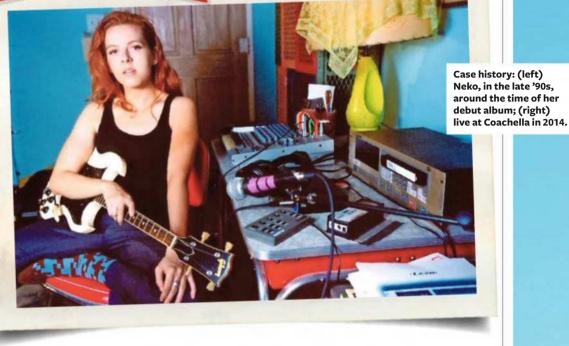
revealed". It had been Case's house, but she had left it after a hellish experience with a stalker. "I had to spend my life savings to go to court and stop these things and become private," says Case in a tone that suggests she's relitigating the issue in court rather than from the sofa of a hotel in Bethnal Green, East London.

The property wasn't technically hers any more, but her stuff was there. At the time of the call, "there were three animals missing," she says. (Everyone escaped.) Police kept her boyfriend at the bottom of the driveway for six hours, in sodden clothes, while the newspaper "somehow got a photographer up next to my house while it's burning," Case says in disbelief. "It was ugly and it's not over."

The house was demolished. But her perspective on the total loss of her possessions is jarringly sanguine: "I didn't think it was important compared to the fact that Puerto Rico had just flooded and was begging for help. It just isn't news compared to that. It wasn't news compared to what everybody had lost in Houston." That may sound sanctimonious on paper: it's not that she's angry at the "fire tornado" - technical term that charred her possessions, but the newspaper denying her hard-won dignity.

ase stayed in Stockholm for three more weeks. The day after discovering

the fire, she recorded Bad Luck, a clarion girl-group ode to misfortune, and got by thanks to the dark humour of co-producer Björn Yttling of Peter Bjorn And John. She thought her voice sounded bad when she listened to the song with mixer Lasse Mårtén. "He's like, 'Maybe that's just what somebody sounds like when their house burns down.' I thought, 'Maybe you're right. Maybe it is OK to sound a little less soulful than you mean it to be."



It gave an unexpected personal resonance to a song that was, like most of Case's work, intended as a "folklore song about folklore that hasn't been written yet," she explains. "I like to make up new ones and I was thinking a lot about superstition." Her hope is that, should listeners infer anything about her from the songs, they "would see me as a person, but not a female person or a male person – equal parts of a soul, rather."

Hence Case's heroines are

not blousy damsels. The opening three songs on Hell-On reinstate power to the women who have been mused and abused by irresponsible male poets: "My voice is straight garroting wire," Case warns on the title track though nobody's ever tried to make her their muse: "I'm not a passive, lovely creature," she says. The epic Halls Of Sarah draws as much from Fleetwood Mac as the Old Testament, and Last Lion Of Albion mocks mankind's urge to tame nature. Case

Blaze of glory: Case's "audaciously crass" sleeve for new album

was inspired by

Adrienne Mayor's

book The Amazons,

which "dug up all this history about the horse warriors of Asia and the Dahomey warriors of Africa."

Mayor's portrayals of these previously undocumented women chimed with Case's suspicions. She studied art history in Vancouver in the 1990s, on a curriculum that included few historic female artists. Her lecturers said that women didn't make art because they weren't allowed to. "I realised that it was all just a big fucking cover-up," she says. "It sounds tinfoil hat, the way I'm saying it. But you know they've been actively erased from history because we were always doing these things. My instincts tell me to defend people or to rail against things that make me want to go and live in the woods. There was more of a ferocity and

more of a force to women than that. We weren't passengers or breeding machines or slaves."

he cover of

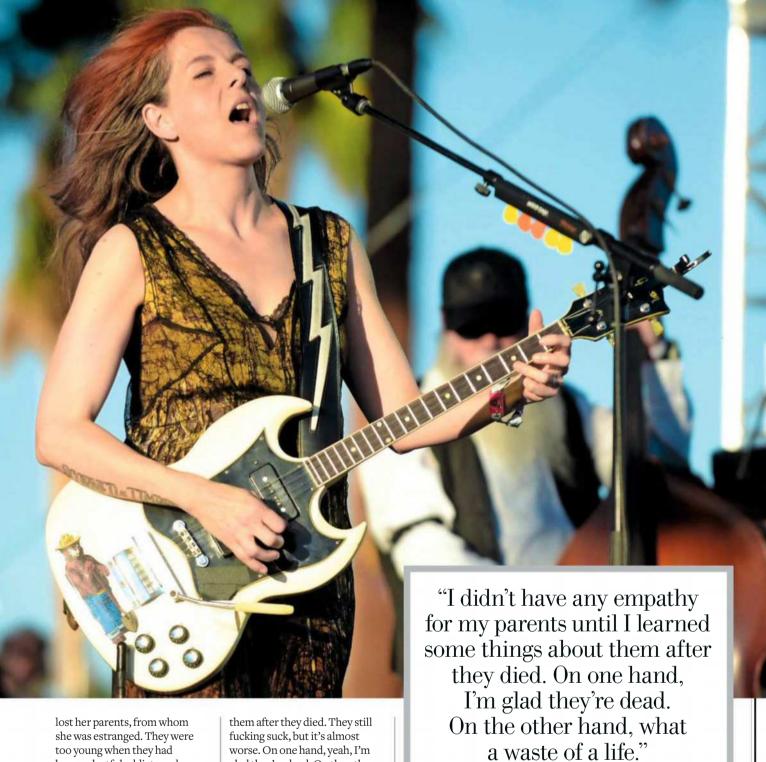
Hell-On was meant to be a photograph taken inside the carcass of Case's home - an oddly beautiful vignette where a wall had burned through a painting. Instead, she decided to turn herself into a mythological figure, a Marlboro Medusa with a cigarette headdress. It's audaciously crass, and glorifies Case's fiercely poor, working class background as the daughter of Ukrainian immigrants. Recently, she and a friend who had grown up similarly were talking about Game Of Thrones, wondering what their noble houses would have been had they inhabited The Known World. "We would have had no noble sigil – it would have been cigarette butts or something."

One of the few obviously personal songs on Hell-On is My Uncle's Navy, a story of a bastard who took pleasure in hurting people and animals, set to simmering dream-pop infinitely more gorgeous than he deserves. "There's memories I'd pay to remove," Case sings, "I'd cut them out myself if that were possible."



It's not about a specific uncle, she says, but an amalgam of people and experiences of "being a little girl and people telling you you're not worth a shit. It's weird to be a child and know adults who are competitive with children and who bully them and no one stops it, even though they see it. No one stops it for years and you actually stop loving people in your family because someone was so cruel and they do nothing about it. You're like, 'Really?!'"

Case's last album, 2013's The Worse Things Get, The Harder I Fight, The Harder I Fight, The More I Love You, was her first obviously personal release. In the years prior to its release, she



too young when they had her, neglectful addicts and alcoholics. Case always says she was raised by their dogs. She also lost her grandmother, the only family she loved. She had always had a survival instinct moving, working, creating until one day the bereavement stew became a swamp. "You're not reflecting, taking time to feel grief," she says. "It just doesn't work. Your body will just go eventually."

Making Hell-On marginally altered Case's perspective on her family. "I didn't have any pity or empathy for my parents until I learned some things about

worse. On one hand, yeah, I'm glad they're dead. On the other hand, it's like, what a waste of a life. It's very sad."

Her parents never expressed remorse over their behaviour. and "couldn't have cared less" when she ran away from home in Tacoma, Washington, when she was 15. In 1986 and 1987, she found "as close to a family environment as I could get" around Tacoma's short-lived but crucial DIY venue Community World Theatre. The punk shows were violent, but club owner $\operatorname{\mathsf{Jim}}$ May - "major feminist, music lover, weirdo, pro-LGBTQ, proeverything" - let her take tickets, sweep floors, make posters. Kurt Cobain ("a really nice person") once complimented one of them. "The reward of seeing music and feeling part of it was really more than I deserved, because I wasn't working hard enough to really be as helpful as I wanted to be."

She was welcomed in by Seattle's gay bars, and watched the riot grrrl scene flourish in Olympia. "I knew some of those women," she says. "They're great. They had a lot of strength

and a lot of audacity in a really good way. I didn't know what I was doing. I didn't know I could be a musician, or I think I would have been right there with them a lot earlier than I was. I wasn't ready yet. Seeing it happen, I definitely felt a mix of jealousy and awe."

The teenage Case sought power a different way. "I fucked every man I wanted to be," she sings on Hell-On's Curse Of The I-5 Corridor: "I was so stupid then". It illuminates

Q*MAVERICK* NEKO CASE

the sanctioned roles for young women in local scenes - groupie, adjunct - but also Case's feral search for belonging. "I needed love," she says plainly. "I didn't have any and I thought that sleeping with men was getting love. I'd never been in love. I didn't know what that meant. If I could get what I thought was love or the possibility of it, or someone just putting their arms around me - you don't understand why you do those things at the time. You're just a little animal. People die without affection. I just knew that I was a girl, which was really unimportant. I never thought I could be a musician, so I didn't realise that my obsession with music was about me wanting to be one."

She finally started playing in bands of women: Maow, Cub, The Corn Sisters. She learned that power was available in a different way, learned to drum and box bare-knuckle, and moved to Vancouver for university and fell in with the literate crowd that would become The New Pornographers. Her 1997 solo debut, The Virginian, was a ragged honky-tonk record in debt to her hero Patsy Cline, but she gradually developed her remarkable voice to write about the gossamer distinction between human and animal. the comforting violence of the natural world, and the unsettling violence of the human one.

To friends' confusion, in 2015 Case released a boxset of her solo albums. "I'm like, 'Oh my God, people do that when they're dead, don't they?' Maybe I wanted to be alive for it, I don't know." Ultimately, her motivations were practical: "I thought it would be a really good way to put everything on vinyl because nothing had been on vinyl all at once."

"I never thought I could be a musician, so I didn't realise that my obsession with music was about me wanting to be one."

ase has been dabbling with writing a book, but isn't sure what it is. She doesn't

know if anyone would believe the parts about her family. "Their lives were horrible and it's amazing how narrowly somebody can miss a pretty decent life," she says. "Child abuse, child rape. It was all there. Murder - fuck, everything. It was ugly. People made sure that

I didn't know half the things that happened, and the lying that they were doing to each other there's no way that I'll ever know who those people were."

But if there's a reason to write a memoir, it's because "there's a certain thing about music that I know better than a lot of people," she says, "so it seems like something I should write about, just because if it helps anyone realise the obstacles that don't really exist, and realise they could also do it, it would feel good to do that. Not like, 'I'm really important and I should do that." She also likes "the fact that I could tell a story that isn't about being wasted, fucking people over or dating celebrities. That would be an interesting twist on rock'n'roll, I guess. I don't know why people are interested in that."

Unlike the boxset, maybe now isn't the time to write it all down. "I feel pretty darn excited," Case says. "Only now are we seeing what a woman's career looks like when she gets past her 30s. There's a lot of women out there making really amazing records as long as they feel like. If you're just true to this thing, people are either going to notice or they're not. Nobody's stopping and nobody's having to go hide and get plastic surgery



→ The Best Of

From heartbreaking country laments to darkly beautiful love songs and beyond...

THRICE ALL THRICE ALL AMERICAN

Neko Case & Her **Boyfriends** (FURNACE ROOM LULLABY, 2000) Spirited country lament for Case's hometown of Tacoma, Washington, and all its squandered hopes.

SOUTH \angle TACOMA WAY Neko Case & Her **Boyfriends** (FURNACE ROOM LULLABY, 2000) Another hometown

homily, but this is a brassy, moving tribute to a late friend and a missed funeral.

9 DEEP RED BELLS **3** Neko Case

(BLACKLISTED, 2002) A hymn for the victims of "Green River Killer" Gary Ridgway, a prolific serial killer in Washington during the 1980s who loomed over Case's childhood.

LADY PILOT 4 Neko Case

(BLACKLISTED, 2002) One of Case's earliest and most fearless heroines, inspired by a flight to Tucson, and here navigating a torrid sky: "We've got a lady pilot/ She's not afraid to die!"



before they come back to the spotlight. That's what I was hoping for."

At 47, and after the depression that followed all those deaths, Case gives herself time to process her emotions rather than shoot forward like an arrow - as with the death of Prince, which hit her hard because she grew up watching him celebrate women: "He was so OK with himself, he wanted to share the talents of these other people." She doesn't hesitate to pat herself on the back every time she remembers to "build in that little buffer within the feeling and the reaction. I don't always get it right. There are still times of blackout rage, and just blackout. I think they're less and less." Her only fear is going back into "the gulag" of depression. But then, "I might, who knows. Nobody knows when those things are going to happen to them."

When Case walked back through her house, she was struck by the arbitrary destruction. Some clothes and ceramics had made it; some paintings, others not. She kept her vegetable seeds in an old eight-track recorder box, which had melted. "By the time I got there, there were already pea vines growing up through the house, which was really cool," she says. The temptation is to make pat connections between Case - fiery of hair, unyielding of purpose - with the things that survived the fire. A lot of people would not have survived a childhood like hers. "I don't know," she says. "I think most people come out of it broken by that, but they don't have a choice. Resilience is not really a choice." Dignity, perhaps, is. [9]

$5^{\,\text{HOLD ON}}_{\,\text{HOLD ON}}$

Neko Case (FOX CONFESSOR BRINGS THE FLOOD, 2006) Case's first autobiographical song, a terse and bitter ballad about being cheated out of love.

THIS TORNADO **OLOVES YOU**

Neko Case (MIDDLE

CYCLONE, 2009) A boisterous and joyful declaration of love, from the point of view of a destructive tornado that "carved your name across three counties."

TI'M AN ANIMAL Neko Case

(MIDDLE CYCLONE, 2009) The purest distillation of Case finding comfort in our yearning, bestial tendencies: "I'm an animal, you're an animal too... pick up that rock, drink from that lake."

O MAN Neko Case

(THE WORSE THINGS GET, THE HARDER I FIGHT, THE HARDER I FIGHT. THE MORE LLOVE YOU 2013) An anthemic kiss-off to those who'd pigeonhole Case - or anyone by their gender.

WHERE DID **LEAVE THAT** FIRE? Neko Case

(THE WORSE THINGS GET, THE HARDER I FIGHT. THE HARDER I FIGHT, THE MORE I LOVE YOU. 2013) A dispatch from the depths of anxiety, asking when hope will return.

$10^{\, m CURSE\,OF}_{\, m THE\,I-5}$ **CORRIDOR**

Neko Case

(HELL-ON, 2018) With a mixture of brutality and tenderness, Case stares down her wayward teenage self.



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*** GOOD

Solid as a rock. You will not be let down.

*** **FAIR**

A decent attempt, but not ripe. Investigate at your own peril.

** **POOR**

Ill-conceived, under-cooked. Please return to the drawing board.

RUBBISH

This will boil your blood with fury and disgust.



Singer-songwriter unveils new sound and look to a shrieking San Francisco crowd.

JAMES BAY FILLMORE. SAN FRANCISCO TUESDAY. 27 MARCH, 2018 ****

t is James Bay who brings up the absent elephant in the room first. "I did an interview the other day," he begins, sat upstairs at the Fillmore in San Francisco. "It always starts with, 'Sorry, I hate to do this but ... I have to ask about the hat." Not that he seems overly bothered by such enquiries. "I imagine David Bowie got a lot of questions: 'Where have the eyebrows gone? Why is your hair bright yellow now?""

Though a wide-brimmed black bolero does sits on top of a flight case outside of his dressing room, the longlocked, fedora-sporting troubadour behind 2015's twice-platinum debut LP Chaos And The Calm is nowhere to be seen today. Instead Bay sits down in suit trousers, steel-toed boots and a sparkly shirt that glistens against his porcelain skin, running his fingers

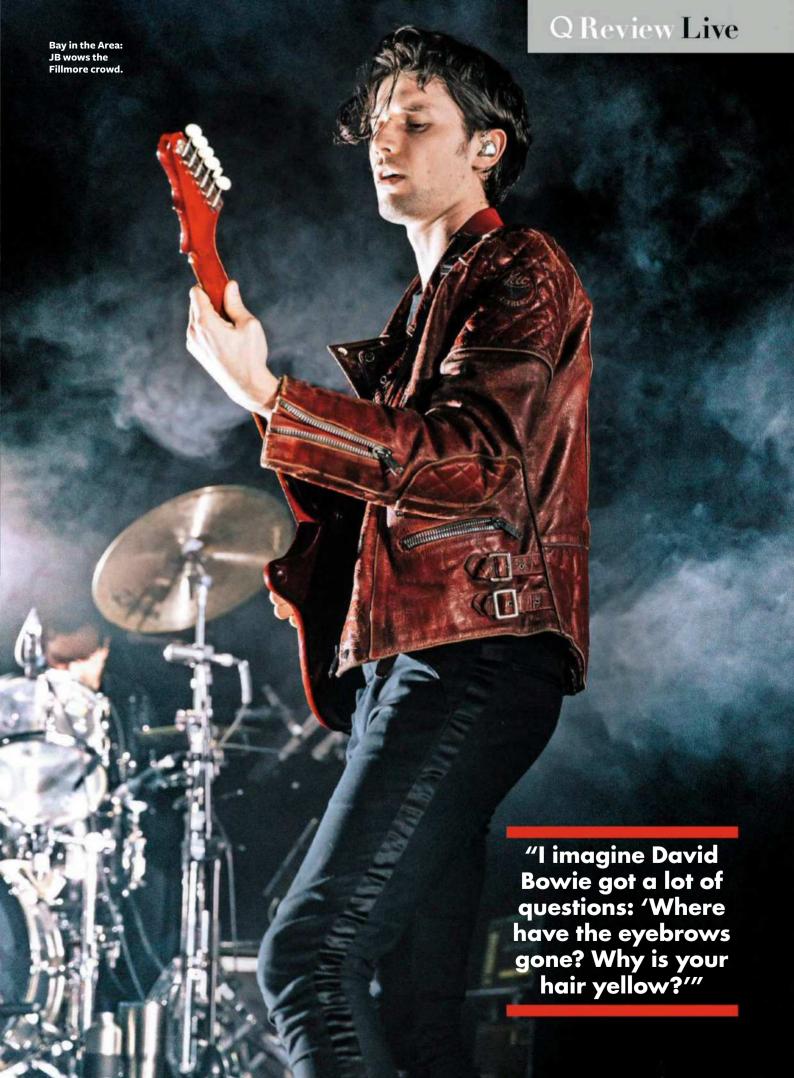
through his newly shorn hair. It's not just his wardrobe that's been given an overhaul, either. Forthcoming second album Electric Light largely jettisons the roots-lite singersongwriter moves of its predecessor in favour of a slick, more modern sound that takes in spacious electronic pop, slinky R&B and the soulful glitches of Bon Iver's recent records.

Bay points to the Auto-Tuned vocals and floating synths of lead single Wild Love as the signpost for his reinvention. "I sat back and listened to it and I knew in that moment that this is not music that was going to be performed by a bloke with long hair and a hat. So I changed," he reasons. "To stay the same is boring. Prince sacked his name off. Michael Jackson went from tuxedo and Afro to hat, glove, red leather jacket, to buckles and a biker jacket across his three most important albums. There are some

more bizarre, potentially biological changes that went on too, but ... "

They are lofty comparisons to make but it transpires Bay currently has his eyes determinedly fixed on some pretty big prizes. The Fillmore is a special place for "The Bay" - as his team call him. When he was growing up in Hitchin he'd pore over live albums recorded here by Aretha Franklin and The Black Crowes and played this room on his 23rd birthday, opening for bluesy American singer ZZ Ward. Now 27, he's since experienced a sensational winning streak.

Chaos And The Calm was a Transatlantic success: Number 1 in the UK. Number 3 in the US. He won the 2015 Brits Critics' Choice Award, played Glastonbury's Pyramid Stage and supported Taylor Swift on the European leg of her 1989 tour. Seeing that level of pop megastardom up close spurned him to go after it







himself. At the 2016 Brits he filled a spot as Justin Bieber's guitarist ("It was mad: 'Look, we've lost our guy. Is James up for this?' I'm not gonna say no"). The Taylor Swift tour, however, was the real revelation for him. "I went in with expanse on my mind. I came out shook even harder, even more hungry for that scale. You get a taste of it and it tastes fucking great."

t a mere 2500 people, tonight's crowd is less than half the size of the ones he's due to play to later this year,

working as a testing ground for a melding of old material and new songs "to freak people out with".

As the room fills, the scale of Bay's show begins to reveal itself. It's the production that strikes you as much as his first bit of peacocking. Though the

stage is modestly sized, Bay treats it like he's in an arena. A film projection plays across a massive screen of two actors in a troubled relationship, their dialogue mirroring the lyrics to Electric Light's opening track. It's the type of thing you're more accustomed to seeing at a big pop concert where some fantastical theme and story arc bookends proceedings.

He enters quite the pop star, too. In a red, Michael Jackson-in-Thriller style leather jacket and black T-shirt, accompanied by deafening screams. Bay's newly beefed-up backing band of four players and two backing singers inject more soul and R&B into shivering guitar favourites such as Craving, and the as-yet-unheard chaingang rock of Us and Slide. The latter's stripped-back arrangement allows the band to down tools and all gather around a microphone behind Bay like

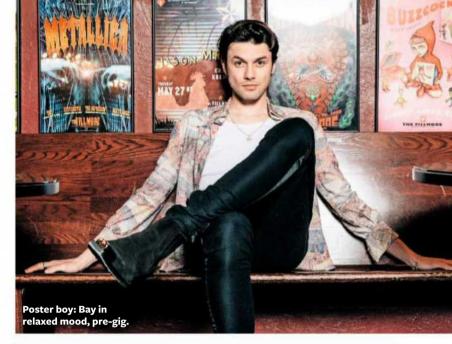


his own backing line of Bay-ettes. It ends on a recording of Allen Ginsberg's poem Song, which plays out as he exits for a mid-set change of clothes. His outfit changes pale in comparison to his guitar-switching though, with almost a different instrument brought out for every song.

For those less fussed by Bay's new whistles-and-bells razzmatazz, there's still plenty of more earnest, one-manand-his-six-string moments. Bay goes in for some serious eye-scrunching noodling over the schmaltzier likes of When We Were On Fire, for instance.

Such older numbers feel a little misplaced now though, and certainly Bay himself looks more entertained hollering new Blondie-tinged single Pink Lemonade. He toe-heels his feet and flicks his head; free-er, friskier, and a lot more dynamic. "I need one thing from you," he says. "You need to be fucking loud." The crowd oblige throughout, inciting clap-alongs and on Just For Tonight they carry a whole chorus so Bay doesn't have to. "Listen," he coos with all the heartthrob charm of Harry Styles. "I had my hopes up. But I didn't expect this. And I love it."

To accompany the new songs' versatility, Bay's voice has diversified too. Rasping and jeering on rockabilly barnstormer Best Fake Smile, on Wild Love it's hushed to allow the electro nuances to flourish. With a soaring



"I came away from the Taylor Swift tour with a taste for that scale. It tastes fucking great."

pre-encore version of breakthrough hit Hold Back The River he sounds like a one-man British Kings Of Leon. It provokes the fans into a final round of ear-splitting shrieking as he comes back for one last number before walking off to Kiss by Prince, a little nod to his new-found capriciousness.

Backstage, Bay recalls a time when the screams were so uncomfortable he had to wince through a performance. "I can understand why The Beatles stopped playing," he says, his choice of reference again betraying the scale of his ambitions. Retiring to his dressing room, it's time to cool down his vocal cords with a humidifier, and prepare for the next show. There's no beer, there's no party, but there is a major pop star in waiting. EVE BARLOW



Need The Sun To Break





are actually doing something really innovative and special, and that's

out of step with current pop trends. In fact, when being interviewed in Q at

Q Review Live

how it should be," she says. "Look at Cardi B. Kendrick is doing the most innovative stuff. If rock musicians aren't, then they shouldn't be the most successful artists."

Newly plugged in to the world around them, the band have even been including a cover of Childish Gambino's Redbone in their recent shows. Cumming does admit there's one modern pop star who is still off her radar though. "We didn't know there was a Taylor Swift song called 22 until we released this record. People keep quoting it, but I still haven't heard it."

It's an engagement that's apparent throughout Twentytwo In Blue, which shakes off its predecessor's more anachronistic trappings for a glossier, more coherent sound. Songs such as Crisis Fest tackle the political climate in the US, reflective of Cumming's own activism setting up DIY organisation Anger Can Be Power to educate and organise young creatives.

"When we started out we were rebelling against shoegaze bands in Brooklyn. We were doing guitar solos," notes Cumming of the change. "Now I feel like we're rebelling against the old version of ourselves."

The band have spent the last few years gigging near-constantly. Kivlen **SETLIST** jokes that the night he slept in their van in a Taco Bell carpark to save money **Burn It** was the low point, but for Cumming there were more serious personal Come On issues. "For years I suffered from Twentytwo crippling depression. I was struggling 2013 before writing this record and always **Crisis Fest** will," she says. "It was manifested on the album as resilience." That resilience Memoria will come in handy later tonight.

Human For

Puppet Strings

Easier Said

Somebody Call

A Doctor

Harvest Moon

I Was A Fool

Only A

Moment

I Was Home

Space

Exploration

Disaster

ith Kivlen sniffling away with pre-show lurgies, Cumming admits to being "terrified" about how

her not "vocally awesome" throat will fare in front of a crowd of 1500. These will prove to be minor concerns, however, as Sunflower Bean are faced with the sort of technical difficulties that would make even the most tourhardened veterans crumble.

Things start promisingly with a fistpumping FM-rock double header of Burn It and Come On. Kivlen hurtles across the stage, turning to eyeball Cumming as they spur each other on, thrashing up Come On's melodies to become ever more frantic. When it ends, she salutes the crowd and thanks them for nudging the album into the UK Top 40 that week.

Then, things stall. "Let's give it up for technical difficulties," Cumming offers nervously, as their tour manager bolts on tage to try and resuscitate Kivlen's temperamental pedalboard. It's hard not to feel sorry for them on what should be a triumphant occasion. No amount of creativity, practice or even luck can save a band from technical problems, but the hush from the stalls is deafening.

Pedalboard seemingly restored to health, they continue with Twentytwo. Cumming is on spellbinding form as Faber and Kivlen recreate the song's richly textured sound. On Crisis Fest, meanwhile, they're all fired up with Cumming imploring the audience to sing along to the refrain of, "if you hold us back you know that we can shout - no, no, no". The tech gremlins soon rear their head again, though.

Cumming fills the gap by talking about first coming across her bandmates, relaying a tale of meeting the then two-piece at a now-shuttered Brooklyn deli and deciding to join their band. She's clearly playing for time, but it's a nice touch.

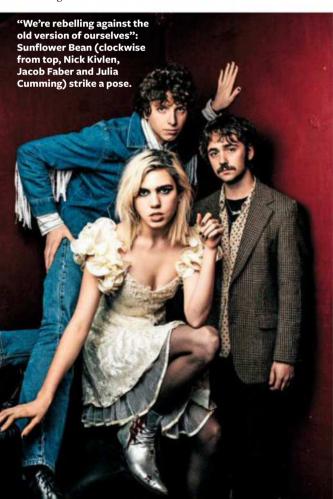
Unfortunately, the fits and starts continue. After Easier Said, Cumming's glass-breaking falsetto allaying any of



a halt again, with Faber improvising on the drums to kill some time. The frustration onstage is palpable and Kivlen has to sit out the next song altogether, a cover of Neil Young's country slow waltz Harvest Moon. However, now retooled as a simpler bass, drum and vocal rendition it actually works better. Stripping it back has brought out the song's gentle poignancy and the crowd are enthralled: swaying, singing, some snogging along.

Finally, it seems that whatever has been plaguing them onstage has been resolved. Kivlen and Cumming's calland-response role play as divided lovers on I Was A Fool serving as the perfect palate cleanser, its Fleetwood Mac-like harmonies transporting an appreciative crowd back to a more even keel after such choppy waters.

It's been an emotional journey and before the final track, Kivlen declares





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TALES OF THE INEXPECTED

Arctics deliver strange, glacial and utterly brilliant sixth set.



ARCTIC MONKEYS TRANQUILITY BASE **HOTEL & CASINO**

DOMINO, OUT 11 MAY

Alex Turner recently revealed the dilemma his band faced about the demos that formed the basis of their sixth album. The quartet were unsure if these songs, written on an upright piano in Turner's spare room, were better suited for a solo venture or for new Arctic Monkeys material. Going with this odd, brilliant, and very un-Arctic Monkeys collection of tracks could turn out to be one of the best decisions they've ever made.

The problem with groups of their size, bands who play arenas and headline festivals, is that most eventually end up in a creative cul-de-sac, hamstrung by the fear that they're one flop album away from playing smaller venues, slipping down the line-up ladder, has-beens sliding past the next-big-things. It's how bands end up with anthems that sound just like their older anthems, with songs that you're sure you've heard before.

That is not a problem with

Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino. It couldn't be further from 2013's colossal AM, where the band retooled their indie-disco singalongs with astadium-rock swagger. There is nothing that you could immediately earmark as a single here, and the first few plays of the album are remarkable mainly for the lack of instant hooks. But the album shifts its gears subtly and gets under your skin. It was mostly recorded at La Frette Studios on the outskirts of Paris and features a rolling rast of musicians. These include producer James Ford, Last Shadow Puppets' touring drummer Loren Humphrey and former Klaxons singer James Righton, all of whom give it the feeling of a low-pressure ensemble piece rather than a big rock record shareholders are relying on for their bonus.

There are echoes of the lounge crooner act Turner inhabited for the between-song patter on the AM tour, all knowing winks, nudge nudges and Clever Trevor one-liners that thinly disguise the fact that these are some

It almost feels like they've embarked on their own full-band side-project.

of the singer's most personal songs. On the swaying, slow-dance opener Star Treatment, with its, "I just wanted to be one of The Strokes" line, he sounds like he's broadcasting from a tannoy inside his mind. The shrill, claustrophobic vocals on the title track, meanwhile, recall OutKast's Andre 3000 at his most playful.

Rolling basslines and an airy layering of warm synths give the songs a lightness of touch. It's never a bombardment: it doesn't sound like there's much going on, but try and get to the bottom of it and your ear will continually hit another sonic wall. It's an album dripping in modern references that could've been made at any point over the past few decades, a retro record from the future. In this respect, it bears a stylistic resemblance to Sly & The Family Stone's There's A Riot Goin' On.

The album moves at its own glacial pace and, to that end, won't appeal to those looking for a new Do I Wanna Know? to sing along to. Its best moments reveal themselves slowly, such as Four Out Of Five morphing from precise, rhythmic beginnings into a blossoming chorus that sounds like something off Bowie's Hunky Dory, or the barroom blues of American Sports gently gliding to an end. It's a strange, wonderful album, one that almost feels like Arctic Monkeys have embarked on their own full-band sideproject. The experiment has worked. From here, they can go anywhere. All bets are off. ★★★★

NIALL DOHERTY Listen To: Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino | Four Out Of Five | American Sports | She **Looks Like Fun**

ROOM SERVICE The albums that inspired Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino



Born To Be With You PHIL SPECTOR

INTERNATIONAL, 1975 The US singer's

1975 masterpiece has long been a touchstone for dreamy rock bands looking to replicate its loose, live feel. It influenced Alex Turner and co's fluid recording approach when they got to La Frette studios. ★★★★★



The Beach Boys **Pet Sounds** Brian Wilson's

60s classic inspired his

band to largely abandon their guitar sound on the record in favour of widescreen instrumentation, most evident on the Western-style sway of The World's First Ever Monster Truck Front Flip. ★★★★



Tame Impala Lonerism MODULAR 2012

The mellower moments on the second

album from Kevin Parker's neopsych collective bring to mind the lithe basslines of the title track and American Sports. Plus, there's also a guest spot from the Aussie group's bassist Cam Avery. ★★★



Q Review New Albums



AMYL AND

BIG ATTRACTION & GIDDY UP

DAMAGED GOODS OUT 18 MAY

Melbourne garage-punks' debut sounds like a home tattoo feels.

Thirty years ago, Amyl And The Sniffers' enthusiastic depiction of Australian larrikin life would have been consigned to toilet venues. In 2018, however, these mulletheads sing about blowjobs and biffs to stadia full of Foo Fighters fans. Good work. Musically, they resemble The Cramps mating with a drunken dingo, and are blessed with singer Amy Taylor, whose post-riot grrrl Nancy Sinatra stance emboldens 80-second blasts such as Stole My Pushbike and I'm Not A Loser ("My roommates think I'm a c**t/But I pay my rent on time every month"). Their debut is all about the first buzz, but Taylor's star power could take Amyl And The Sniffers higher. ★★★ KEITH CAMERON

Listen To: I'm Not A Loser | **Balaclava Lover Boogie**



BELLY

BELLYTOURING, OUT NOW

Alt-rock heroes' first album in 23 years.

Working alongside Kristin Hersh in Throwing Muses, Tanya Donnelly couldn't help but seem the more straightforward songwriter. When

her band Belly released their 1993 debut Star, however, its Rapunzel thickets of psychosexual drama confirmed Donnelly's own sweetly subversive powers. Dove - cheering follow-up to Belly's 2016 live reunion - doesn't trickle off to the sides of reality quite like that. Even so, its domestic tangles (Suffer The Fools), defiant life lessons (Army

Of Clay's clarion call) and grown-up expressions of love (Girl, the country bloom of Heartstrings) exude warmth and subtlety, reflected in Donnelly's sugar-andsteel voice. A little indie olive branch, Dove is as welcoming as it is welcome. ★★★★ VICTORIA SEGAL

Listen To: Army Of Clay | Girl



ASH **ISLANDS**

INFECTIOUS, OUT 18 MAY

Fizzy heartbreak anthems from Britpop's eternal teens.

Few people can get away with channelling youthful angst at 41, but Ash singer Tim Wheeler is definitely one of them. Written in the wake of a recent break-up, his band's seventh album is the sound of a man looking back on what went wrong and wondering how to put the pieces back together. You can hear echoes of the teenager Wheeler once was in the bittersweet pop-punk jangle of True Story and moist-eyed showstopper Incoming Waves, though the sad faces are ditched for fantastically sweary last-days-ofsummer rant Buzzkill. It's sweetly out of step with prevailing pop trends, but it will certainly strike a chord with anyone who has ever had their heart broken. ** **DAVE EVERLEY**

Listen To: True Story | It's A Trap | **Incoming Waves**



BELLAUNION. OUT 11 MAY

Baltimore duo's seventh outing: grander, but not very memorable.

While it isn't a complete overhaul of their trusted formula of husky-voiced melancholia and shimmering organs, Baltimore duo Beach House's seventh album features the most significant reworking of it yet. Co-producer Pete Kember piles on the sonic details, making 7 denser and grander than its predecessors. Pay No Mind shares its glacial-paced DNA with Godley & Creme's Cry, Lemon Glow churns and sighs like a stately My Bloody Valentine, while the vocal collages and shape-shifting backgrounds on L'Inconnue are unlike anything the pair have tried before. There's plenty to uncover within its slowly crashing waves of sound, but the main problem is that it all washes over you without leaving a lasting impression. Sumptuous, but forgettable. ★★★ CHRIS CATCHPOLE

Listen To: Dive | L'Inconnue



ENDLESS SCROLL

WHAT'S YOUR RUPTURE, OUT 1 JUNE

Impotent fury from zealous post-punks.

Bodega kick up an abrasive racket with non-existent production and lyrics about the folly of consumerism. So far, so promising, but the tipped New Yorkers somehow fail to make these qualities sing. How Did This Happen!? smugly rails against smug political protesters; Bookmarks denounces web culture while suggesting a world view as deep as a laptop screen; and I Am Not A Cinephile's mantra was never going to have any resonance outside their own rehearsal room. The gentler Jack In Titanic proves they're far better channelling Welsh hardcore trio Mclusky's clumsy charm than shouty post-punk. Overall, Endless Scroll feels self-righteous and misses the crucial idea that insurrection can actually be fun. ** JAZZ MONROE

Listen To: Jack In Titanic | **Bookmarks**



NEKO CASE HELL-ON

ANTI-.OUT 1 JUNE

Singer-songwriter displays best of her talents on arresting eighth.

With a career that's produced seven solo LPs and collaborations with The New Pornographers and k.d. lang, Neko Case is one of the most arresting singer-songwriters of the last 20 years. Hell-On is an exemplary illustration of her talents: its lyrics holding a fairytale poise and her voice uniquely plaintive. There are familiar themes - wildness, death, the sea - but these songs seem distinct, a result of both a new producer (Björn Yttling) and new stories: the fire that burned down her home (Bad Luck), unwilling female muses (Halls Of Sarah) and a Mark Lanegan duet about music, men and the passage of time (Curse Of The I-5 Corridor). It shows that whatever life brings her, Case can turn it into something startling. ★★★ LAURA BARTON

Listen To: Curse Of The I-5 Corridor | Halls Of Sarah



Urban dystopia concept LP produces best work of Super Furry man's career.



BABELSBERG

ROUGH TRADE OUT 8 JUNE

If artists from the '60s, '70s and '80s typically suffered a creative slump come middle age, the same can't be said for those who came up in the '90s: Damon Albarn, Thom Yorke and the Gallaghers are still producing some of their best work. Often overlooked, though, is Super Furry Animals' frontman Gruff Rhys, possibly because he's focused on a solo career whose conceptual tendencies culminated with 2014's American Interior, an album about 18th-century Welsh explorer John Evans.

Follow-up Babelsberg is similarly high concept - its title spins the name of a region in the German city of Potsdam into an imagined place filled with the towering hubris of luxury apartments. But this being Rhys, a sterling melody is never far away. In fact, Babelsberg is absolutely stuffed with some of his finest songs to date.

Its orchestral pop production is perhaps represented most

vividly on the Scott Walker-ish Drones In The City, which finds strange beauty in sinister government surveillance. Throughout we're in similar baroque territory, with band and orchestra slowing down and speeding up in tandem to heighten the drama, amid moments of disorientating trippiness, such as when the dancers in The Club fall through the floor, "descending to different dimensions".

Babelsberg sweetens its sometimes bleak modern world

views with pop confection - the delusional Frontier Man sounds like the ghost of Glen Campbell, while a sublime duet with actress/ model Lily Cole, Selfies In The Sunset, depicts a couple emptygrinning into their phones among scenes of coming Armageddon. But even if there's a sense of darkness descending, in his best solo album yet, Gruff Rhys paints with bright and uplifting colours. ****

TOM DOYLE

Listen To: Frontier Man | **Limited Edition Heart | The Club**

GRUFF RHYS talks to TOM DOYLE about his orchestral manoeuvres and finding hope in the apocalypse..

Babelsberg is a real place in Germany, but in this case it's an imagined place in your mind?

"I was trying to think of a title similar to the Tower Of Babel, but I thought Tower Of Babel would be crap. It was made in a hurry before the studio was demolished to make way for luxury flats, which kind of fitted with the lyrics of the songs. The idea of the title is people trying to build a tower to heaven, but they end up creating a hell."

It's a contrast to the orchestral sound of the record...

"I've always been drawn to songwriters who try and subvert the beauty of an orchestra. It creates this sort of weird tension."

How does it feel to stand in front of a 72-piece orchestra playing on your songs?

"I feel like a gatecrasher, like I've turned up to the wrong building. So in a way that makes it easier to handle. I don't have the kind of voice that can

compete with an orchestra. But I have a microphone.' Selfies In The Sunset is a duet with actress/model Lily Cole. The song is bleak but did it leave you feeling more positive about the world?

"The song is about the end of the world and the apocalypse has arrived and people are taking photos in front of the golden glow of the explosions. Lyrically, it's a fairly bleak record, but it's about piecing together some kind of coherent path to the future when everything's at its most messy. There's space for hope there.'

MODEM CLASSIC



DIRTY COMPUTER

WONDAL AND ARTS SOCIETY/BAD BOY/ ATLANTIC.OUT NOW

There is a moment on Americans, Dirty Computer's closing track, that is the sound of a red baseball hat being ground under the dancing heel of a white-patent boot. "Don't try to take my country," sings Janelle Monáe, bouncing the rhetoric of the Right back in their faces over a Let's Go Crazy gallop, "I will defend my land." Anyone in the market for a rallying cry - and in 2018, who isn't? - should step this way. Monáe has been making her country great since 2010's The ArchAndroid, but with her third album, she turbocharges her long-standing

It's a kaleidoscopic merging of the personal and the political, from the feminist subversions of Pynk to the testifying of Diango Jane ("let the vagina have a monologue"). She may have once identified as a hi-concept android, but Dirty Computer shows her in a fully human incarnation: complicated, convoluted and very much of the flesh.

mission to stand up for blackness, for queerness, for femaleness.

The fact Prince was involved in the album's genesis, working with Monáe on sound ideas and instrumental parts, is hardly camouflaged. Not least because Monáe shares his sexual mind and energy on Take A Byte's purple strut and Make Me Feel's Kiss-like flicker. Screwed, meanwhile, is a gleefully filthy play on the title's different meanings: "you fucked the world up/We'll fuck it all back down."

Yet it speaks volumes that Prince's presence - not to mention that of Brian Wilson on the title track - is not even the third most interesting thing here. Fierce, honest and a challenge to the forces of obsolescence, Dirty Computer feels like a vital upgrade from a true renegade. ** VICTORIA SEGAL

Listen To: Pynk | Make Me Feel | **Americans**





RY COODER THE PRODIGAL SON

FANTASY/CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL,

OUT 11 MAY

Veteran guitarist stirs up roots rock rebellion.

Over the last half-century Ry Cooder has served as a roots mixologist, rebooting the styles of yesteryear to critique the iniquities of today. He also writes his own beadily droll tunes and ranks as an all-time guitar great. His first studio LP since 2012 finds his nation in deep doodoo, but almost every tune responds with rumbustious satire (Gentrification) or reverent lyricism (The Stanley Brothers' Harbor Of Love). His reading of Blind Willie Johnson's Nobody's Fault But Mine is, however, a bone-chiller from the spiritual abyss, Cooder's slide guitar playing off his drummer/producer son Joachim's spectral soundscapes. A career-high in an album of highs. ** **MATSNOW**

Listen To: Nobody's Fault But Mine | You Must Unload



CUT WORMS **HOLLOW GROUND**

IAG IAGLIWAR OUT NOW

Smartly poetic '60s classicism from Brooklyn singer-songwriter.

With a name derived from a line of William Blake poetry and having released an EP that included a reworking of Rimbaud's A Season In Hell, it's clear that Max Clarke is operating at a fairly intellectual level. Fortunately, his music doesn't require an English literature degree to be enjoyed. Clarke specialises in a woozy '60s classicism that has echoes of doowop, pre-Rubber Soul-era Beatles and '70s Beach Boys. The songwriting is so atmospherically pitch-perfect that you can't help but be pulled under by the sweet melancholic drag of songs such as Don't Want To Say Goodbye and Like Going Down Sideways. Quietly intoxicating, it's equal parts brain and beauty. ** JAMES OLDHAM

Listen To: Don't Want To Say Goodbye | Like Going Down **Sideways**



AS LONG AS I HAVE YOU

POLYDOR OLIT 1 ILINE

The Who frontman revisits his yoof on bruising ninth solo album.

Before The Who became The Who, they played soul and blues in West London pubs. Here, Roger Daltrey returns to the music of his adolescence, corralling nine covers and two like-minded originals. Like Going Home, his 2014 album with Wilko Johnson, it's the ideal fit for that weathered voice. Pete Townshend plays guest guitar, but never impinges. This is the Daltrey show: swinging between Get On Out Of The Rain's heavy funk, testifying R&B on As Long As I Have You and the countrysoul of Certified Rose. There's only one misstep, a sluggish take on Nick Cave's Into My Arms. Otherwise, just as with The Who, Daltrey climbs inside every song, slaps it around a bit and makes it his own. *** MARK BLAKE

Listen To: As Long As I Have You How Far | Get On Out Of The Rain



THE CORNER OF A SPHERE

LOST MAP OLIT NOW

Square-peg singer-songwriter's awkwardly charming fourth.

If anyone can reclaim "whimsical" for the forces of good, it's Angus Fairbairn. The Manchester-raised, London-based Fairbairn, who performs as Alabaster DePlume, lands acrobatically between Devendra Banhart, Donovan and The Mersey Poets, cosmic dreaminess cut with wry exasperation. Mission statement Be Nice To People encourages humans to be their best selves; on Is It Enough? - Vashti Bunyan with a slice of arts-centre carrot cake - he gently mocks endless consumption; while They Put The Stars Far Away explains why we can't have nice things: "What would you do with the stars? Try and smoke them? I know I would." A precious little addition to music's cabinet of curiosities. VICTORIA SEGAL

Listen To: They Put The Stars Far Away | Be Nice To People



PREQUELLE

LOMA VISTA RECORDINGS, OUT 1 JUNE

Daft and highly enjoyable fourth from pantomime metal outfit.

Theatrical Swedish metallers Ghost managed to get through three albums without revealing their identities before being unmasked when disgruntled band members brought a court case against leader Tobias Forge last year. Their status as mere mortals does little to dampen the spirit of this excellent fourth album. Forge dips back into

his dressing-up box and emerges as latest persona Cardinal Copia to lead a new line-up (again anonymous) through 10 songs of twin-guitar assaults, speed-riffing and bombastic pop choruses. The apocalyptic rock of Faith, Dance Macabre's Metallica-meets-Queen giddiness and the lighter-waving balladry of Life Eternal suggest a mainstream breakthrough is imminent. It's all quite ridiculous and lots of fun. ★★★★ **NIALL DOHERTY**

Listen To: Dance Macabre | Rats | Faith | Life Eternal



I SOMETIMES DREAM OF GLUE

CHERRY RED. OUT 11 MAY

Ex-Auteurs man returns with sex, glue and tiny people concept LP.

Last heard of in 2016 when he was claiming ownership of almost all music by trademarking the frequency 43Hz, arch-contrarian Luke Haines returns with his eighth solo album. A concept piece about a West London community of over-sexed, solvent-abusing miniature people, I Sometimes Dream Of Glue doesn't want for arresting ideas, taking in popular 1970s toys, voyeuristic sex and a protagonist's "neolithic boner". It's hardly surprisingly that it's less interesting musically than it is lyrically, Haines's trademark whispered vocals backed by understated arrangements with the occasional flash of English folk phrasing. That said, there's not a dull moment here. ★★★ PHIL MONGREDIEN

Listen To: I Fell In Love With An OO Scale Wife | Only The **Stones Will Know**



JAMIE ISAAC

(04:30) IDLER

MARATHON ARTISTS OUT 1 JUNE

Downbeat beat-maker crafts meticulous bedroom idylls.

In Jamie Isaac's luscious, mood-lit R&B is the faintest discomfort, a lingering threat that the whole structure might suddenly disintegrate. On his masterful second album, the choirboy-turned-beat-maker beds down in this uneasy state, lacing opulent production with minor-key anxiety. He can soundtrack vibe-heavy late-nighters (Eyes Closed) or Sundayafternoon reveries (Maybe), but his best evokes some atemporal splice of the two. Melt sends Isaac's rich, balletic vocals dancing across a disembodied jazz lament, while Wings highlights his kinship with fellow insomniac and Brit school alumnus King Krule: sweetly poetic lyrics complicated by unresolved chords and a readiness to luxuriate in despondency. ★★★★ JAZZ MONROE

Listen To: Wings | Delight | Maybe

Q Review New Albums



THE HORIZON JUST LAUGHED

SECRETI Y CANADIANI OLITNOM

Twenty-one years in, Seattle singer-songwriter's best yet.

Despite being acknowledged as a massive inspiration by the far more famous Father John Misty, Damien Jurado remains a cult concern. Maybe this is because his music gently invites you in, rather than being immediately attention-grabbing. Following on from his brilliant psychedelic soul/folk Maraqopa trilogy of albums released between 2012 and 2016, the 45-year-old produces himself here for the first time, stripping back his sound for a set of mysterious and lovely songs that namecheck classic authors (Dear Thomas Wolfe) and old bandleaders (Percy Faith) and slip between shades of John Martyn and Bill Withers. Altogether, it's a thing of great beauty. ★★★★ TOM DOYLE

Listen To: Allocate | Dear Thomas Wolfe | Over Rainbows And Rainier



KACY & CLAYTON

THE SIREN'S SONG NEW WEST OUT NOW

Folk duo spread their wings with help from Wilco's Jeff Tweedy.

Three years on from their breakthrough second album, Strange Country, Canadian folk duo Kacy & Clayton's ability to enchant remains potent on The Siren's Song. Somewhat deceptively, the sweeter their strain of folk sounds, the darker it is: be it the haunting title track or A Certain Kind Of Memory establishing a dazed reverie typically associated with Mazzy Star. With Jeff Tweedy's production nurturing their countrified-rock aspirations brilliantly on White Butte Country, there's real evolution on display, too. With all of this to their credit, it's just a shame Kacy & Clayton only allocated themselves a mere nine tracks to show it off. ★★★★ GEORGE GARNER

Listen To: The Siren's Song | White Butte Country | A Certain **Kind Of Memory**



FLOATING FEATURES

HARDLY ART OUT 11 MAY

Seattle four-piece relocate to LA for macabre medley of '60s rock.

A spellbindingly gloomy instrumental ushers in the third LP from La Luz, who recently relocated their seductively noirish surf-rock from Seattle to LA. It's a move the band address directly on the track California Finally, an insouciant celebration of summer that's soon interrupted by horror, as human screams meld with those of the guitar. Tempering pop sweetness with strains of garage and psych is what La Luz do best, and frontwoman Shana Cleveland strikes a clever balance between her gossamer vocals and swaggering guitar. Yet the band's mastery of mood often comes at the expense of memorability, with the melodies and refrains of individual tracks tending to merge into a single mass of bittersweet malaise. ** RACHEL AROESTI

Listen To: Floating Features | California Finally | Greed Machine



RAY I AMONTAGNE PART OF THE LIGHT

ΡΟΔ ΟΠΤ 18 ΜΔΥ

Grizzled singer-songwriter's dream-like seventh.

Ray LaMontagne's 2004 debut, Trouble, introduced a gravel-voiced contrarian rather short on social skills. Fourteen years on, the Maine-based backwoodsman has built a substantial, ever-evolving catalogue and become a star in the US. Part Of The Light finds him in dream-like mode, and though he'll never rival Guy Garvey for loquacity, he's so comfortable in his own skin that To The Sea details a cheery trip to the seaside ("I'll be dozing over there, cosy in my folding chair") and his voice soars where it once growled. Closer Goodbye Blue Sky is all crunching riffs and echodrenched vocals; the brooding It's Always Been You is an unsettlingly fearful love song and Paper Man does the quiet-loud-quiet business with subversive glee. ★★★★ JOHN AIZLEWOOD

Listen To: Paper Man | To The Sea



STOP-START

RECKLESS YES, OUT NOW

Manchester trio inject new energy into an established local template.

Three-piece Liines aren't the first Mancunian band to channel the ominous rumble of Joy Division, but adding some riot grrrl anger makes for a refreshing twist on an old favourite. There's a real menace to the playing on the likes of Find Something and Blackout, with Tamsin Middleton's bass very much to the fore. The most potent weapon in their arsenal, however, is frontwoman/ guitarist Zoe McVeigh's voice, an impassioned holler that makes comparisons with Sleater-Kinney's Corin Tucker seem inevitable. As she sings, "All that I have now is gone" she injects genuine drama into the standout Hold Your Breath. A very promising debut. ★★★★ PHIL MONGREDIEN

Listen To: Find Something Disappear | Hold Your Breath | **Never Wanted This**



LUMP

DEAD OCEANS, OUT 1 JUNE

Startling collaboration from Laura Marling and Mike Lindsay.

LUMP began life as a sound cycle composed by Tunng founder Mike Lindsay, who then enlisted Laura Marling after a chance meeting at

a Neil Young show. Lindsay's compositions are intricate, beautiful things, while Marling's lyrics draw on early-20th-century surrealism, Edward Lear and Ivor Cutler, to discuss individualism, public personae and the peculiarities of modern life. Her voice at times seems disembodied, elsewhere it carries a heaviness and a huskiness,

as on the transcendent Late To The Flight. It's particularly pleasing to hear Marling somehow untethered from the confines of being Laura Marling. The sense here is of two artists drawing creative sustenance from new light. ★★★★ LAURA BARTON

Listen To: Late To The Flight | **Curse Of The Contemporary**

CALL TO ARMS

New Yorkers deliver riotous state-of-the-world address.

PARQUET COURTS

WIDE AWAKE!

If there were ever a Parquet Courts crossover moment, this is surely it. Since 2012, the **New Yorkers have amassed** a cult following by engaging (well, yelling at) a generation beleaguered by ads and austerity, neo-liberalism gone mad and governments gone silent. In the political shit show of 2018, their aesthetic - antisocial smartarses riotously denouncing capitalism - faces an unprecedented open goal.

There are echoes here of Gang

Of Four, who prescribed Entertainment! for the onset of Thatcherism. But whereas their Transatlantic forebears splintered around album two, Parquet **Courts sound sharper and more** dexterous than ever. This sixth LP renews its predecessors' finest tricks, from their 2013 debut's Jonathan Richman-indebted screeds (Extinction) to the warm and fuzzy philosophical ambles of their last album, Human Performance (Tenderness). Broadening the palette, Mardi Gras Beads introduces a touch of psychedelia - thank Danger Mouse, the LP's unlikely producer - while Normalization revisits

their trademark pitch of Bernie Sanders compèring Friday night at CBGBs.

It's in that evangelising mode that they feel unstoppable: Violence depicts a land of ATM machines "issuing overdraft fees from beyond the grave", then demystifies social renewal ("Where is an up-and-coming neighbourhood coming from?") and digresses into the narrator's

Panquet Courts

own complicity. Total Football's elastic riffs and antic basslines conceal a rallying cry for workers, authors and poets to collectivise and "dismantle the institution" a revolutionary manifesto hiding in plain sight. Chaotic, visionary and righteously pissed off, Wide Awake! feels like the perfect rock record for the times. ★★★ JAZZ MONROE

Listen To: Total Football Tenderness | Violence | Extinction





Glasgow trio favour big, brash choruses over subtlety.

LOVE IS DEAD

VIRGIN OUT 25 MAY

Chvrches have always existed in a hinterland between userfriendly pop and a darker, more compelling strain of electronica. Their third album doubles down on the former mode, proffering a string of relentlessly massive choruses machine-tooled for festival crowd sing-alongs.

Having previously worked alone, Love Is Dead sees the band team up with writer and producer Greg Kurstin, whose roster of hits includes Adele's Hello and Sia's

Chandelier. It's possible that this simpler, more conventional take on Chvrches' commanding synth-pop is a result of his influence: while the band have long been prolific manufacturers of earworm-y melodies, they once did so with an obliqueness that set them apart. Love Is Dead's

songs, however, don't so much burrow into your brain as thwack you over the head, and the band's tendency to fashion refrains from little more than the song title (see: Get Out, Deliverance, Forever, Never Say Die) means some tracks are memorable simply by dint of merciless repetition.

The songs don't so much burrow into your brain as thwack you over the head.

Amid the button-pushing pop, however, are things to savour: Lauren Mayberry's sweet, never shrill vocal; a stream of imperious synth sounds; a pleasingly dour cameo from The National's Matt Berninger on My Enemy.

The penultimate three songs - a stripped-back ballad, a haunting instrumental and a sensationally moody take on '80s electro - are a particular reminder of how seductive Chvrches can be when they drop the pop manual. $\star\star\star$ RACHEL AROESTI

Listen To: My Enemy | God's Plan | **Really Gone**

STEPHEN MALKMUS & THE JICKS

SPARKLE HARD

DOMINO OUT 18 MAY

Former Pavement frontman's best album with The Jicks.

Stephen Malkmus has long been threatening to become the musical equivalent of a Sunday supplement that you glance at if you've got the time - occasionally interesting but hardly essential. Sparkle Hard, his seventh LP with The Jicks, aims to shake that situation up a bit. It does so in part by revisiting the offhand poeticism of his first band, Pavement (Middle America, with its slanted melodicism, could be an early-'90s lost classic), but this isn't just a nostalgia trip. There's a richness here – the autumnal strings in Solid Silk, the Van Dyke Parks whimsy of Difficulties/ Let Them Eat Vowls - that's been absent from previous Jicks records. It's what makes this one worth picking up. ★★★★

JAMES OLDHAM Listen To: Cast Off I Middle America | Solid Silk





BAD CONTESTANT

ATLANTIC OUT 1 JUNE

Debut offering from lugubrious Londoner.

On his first album, 21-year-old Matt Maltese plays the loser lover, crooning his way through a set of gratifyingly droll dispatches from the frontline of hopeless romanticism. Drifting between swelling chamber pop and countrified ballads, Maltese's arch confections have an obvious parallel in the work of Father John Misty, but the waves of bathos also recall Britpop raconteurs Jarvis Cocker and Neil Hannon. On the final two tracks, Maltese turns his attention to the apocalypse - although he's careful not to let the subject matter ruffle his wryly doleful vocal. Bad Contestant may sound studiously restrained, but Maltese never lets things stagnate, buoying the album along with his amusing lyricism. ★★★★ RACHEL AROESTI

Listen To: Greatest Comedian | Sweet 16 | Guilty



ADDENDUM

RIBBON, OUT 18 MAY

Spectral return from America's professor of pop.

Like his former college roommate Ariel Pink, synth-pop polymath John Maus affects to be the most awkward of performers, the reluctant star who forces himself into the limelight. It's true Maus has loftier distractions he recently spent two years completing a doctorate in political science. But this companion piece to 2017's engagingly arch Screen Memories is a reminder of his talent for delivering gothic-pop miniatures infused with wry humour. Dumpster Baby sounds like John Waters doing Bauhaus; Mind The Droves twists post-punk into kinky knots; and the mordant 1987 refracts '80s nostalgia through a coldwave hall of mirrors. An intriguing, if not quite essential, addition to the Maus canon. ★★★ **RUPERT HOWE**

Listen To: Dumpster Baby | Mind The Droves | 1987



MIDDLE KIDS **LOST FRIENDS**

LUCKYNUMBER.OUT NOW

Promising, if a little one-paced, start for Australian trio.

From Tame Impala and Courtney Barnett to more recent success stories such as Julia Jacklin and Alex Lahey, Australia continues to provide fertile soil for up-and-coming indie-leaning artists. Following in their footsteps are Sydney-based threesome Middle Kids, whose solid, countryfied vignettes of joy and melancholy sound like the soundtrack to a coming-of-age film and have attracted praise from Elton John. While these 12 tracks occasionally meld into one other a little too easily, there are many moments of promise, from the earworm licks of Don't Be Hiding to Elton's favourite Edge Of Town, all strippedback folkiness and earnest slide guitar.★★★

HANNAH J DAVIES

Listen To: Edge Of Town Don't Be Hiding | Never Start



AIDAN MOFFAT AND RM HUBBERT

HERE LIES THE BODY

ROCK ACTION, OUT 11 MAY

Characteristically earthy folk from Arab Strap singer.

After 30 years, Aidan Moffat's delight in the viscera of daily existence remains unsatiated. He bills his new album as about "sex and death"; he could have said the same about any of his records since he started with Arab Strap back in 1996. Here he joins up with guitarist and songwriter RM Hubbert - another lifer in Glasgow's DIY scene - to create a starkly modern folk record centred on a narrative of a mother leaving her family. That story is leavened by the occasional vocal accompaniment of singer Siobhan Wilson, but lines such as "she's a bombshell in leggings... but she's best when they're all on the floor" mean Moffat is always on hand to drag things back down to earth. ★★★ JAMES OLDHAM

Listen To: Cockcrow | Mz. Locum



ONEOHTRIX **POINT NEVER** AGE OF

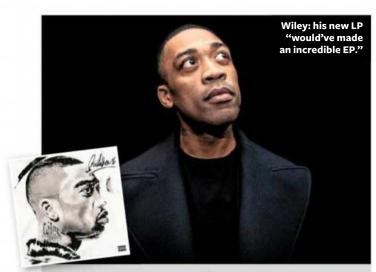
WARP. OUT 1 JUNE

Uneasy listening from David Byrne collaborator.

Once known for abrasive noise, Oneohtrix Point Never's Daniel Lopatin is now a leading avant-garde composer. On Age Of, fresh from co-producing David Byrne's American Utopia, the electronic maestro corrals everything from classical baroque to deconstructed techno and ancient folk ballads, all viewed through his cracked laptop screen. The Station's acoustic guitar and asphyxiated vocals evoke a prehistoric R&B, like the Neptunes in a haunted temple; Anohni duets with sampled screams and James Blake's churchly keyboards on the spirit-churning hymnal Same. By the end, Lopatin has captured the uneasy calm of a mind unhinged by information overload. ★★★ JAZZ MONROF

Listen To: The Station | Same

Q Review New Albums



GODFATHER 2

CTA OUT NOW

Grime don's half-great sequel to last year's commercial peak.

Having scored the biggest commercial success of his career at the age of 37 with his 11th album, Godfather, it's small wonder Wiley has followed it up just one year on. After all, the original 1974 movie The Godfather: Part II set the benchmark for sequels that improve on the original.

Promisingly, Wiley's follow-up screams out of the blocks like it's possessed with a quartet of grime bangers as thrilling as anything on its predecessor. Unfortunately, he doesn't maintain the pace and it soon subsides into slower tempos and introspective moods with, the deep-house-flavoured Crash aside, mixed results. It feels like a middling album that would've made an incredible EP, but when Wiley thrills, he really thrills. STEVE YATES

Listen To: Bar | I Call The Shots



THE FUTURE AND THE PAST

ATO OUT 1 ILINE

A bold message of optimism on Virginia singer's soulful second.

After the lush strings, horns and soft vocals of her critically acclaimed 2015 self-titled debut, Natalie Prass had written her second album, had her band in place and was about to hit the record button. Then came the US election of 2016, the outcome of which forced her to start over again. The result is a surprisingly jubilant follow-up, with the Richmond, Virginia-based singer-songwriter largely disposing of her delicate sound in favour of groove, R&B and '80s pop. And that's where the real magic lies: The Future And The Past may have been born from a soulsapping era of American politics, but Prass's outlook is defiantly optimistic. Listening to it, yours will be too. ★★★★ HANNAH FLINT Listen To: Sisters | Hot For The



PROC FISKAL

INSULA

HYPERDLIB OLIT 8 ILINE

Alternate realities collide on Scots beat-maker's debut.

Nominally a grime producer, 21-yearold Edinburgh native Joe Powers is also patched into dance music's global network, his agile electronica here taking equal inspiration from Chicago's footwork scene. He's clearly a big fan of labelmate Burial, too, given the similar way he interleaves his quick-stepping beats with fuzzy samples of street conversations, phone calls and media broadcasts. Rhythmically complex yet deftly controlled, Scotch Precog sounds like it's constructed entirely from fragments of dial tones, Dopamine is reminiscent of Wiley's ice-cold "eski" beats, while Dish Washing has a limpid, aqueous ambience that feels like it's been channelled from a parallel digital world. ★★★★ **RUPERT HOWE**

Listen To: Scotch Precog | Dopamine | Dish Washing



WANNA BE YOUR MAN

STONES THROW, OUT 11 MAY

Second coming for forgotten man of '80s funk.

Tenacious crate-diggers have unearthed some fascinating talents in their search for "private press" rarities, not least San Francisco funk oddball Prophet, who self-released an album in 1984 before disappearing for three decades. Rediscovered by Stones Throw's Peanut Butter Wolf, who then connected him with Los Angeles producer Mndsgn, Prophet remains an intriguing proposition, laying down off-key, falsetto come-ons over bass-popping curios such as Ooo Wee Yeah. At times he comes off like a home-studio version of Prince (Party), at others a shoestring Rick James (Right On Time), but the real pleasure is in discovering a singular talent who has finally found his groove. ** RUPERT HOWE

Listen To: Ooo Wee Yeah | Party | **Right On Time**



CAROLINF ROSF

LONER

NEW WEST OUT 18 MAY

New York-based singer takes a turn for the odd on second album.

Money, misogyny, motherhood: Caroline Rose's second album doesn't shy away from big issues. Yet the singer-songwriter, who prefers to wear red and whose videos showcase her uninhibitedly silly take on bigbudget dance routines, delivers her modern protest songs with an invigorating lightness of touch. If her debut, I Will Not Be Afraid, specialised in scuzzy country-rock, LONER's roots twist harder, Money and Bikini combining plasticky new wave with rockabilly and surf music. Jeannie Becomes A Mom shows off shinier synth-pop storytelling, but this is a record of fiery energy, spinning into sight like a chunk of chrome off a satellite, fierce, funny and beautifully unpredictable. ★★★ VICTORIA SEGAL

Listen To: Money | Jeannie Becomes A Mom | Bikini



Mountain | Nothing To Say

SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO **MURMURATIONS**

WICHITA.OUT 11 MAY

Electronic duo hook up with choir for avian-themed fifth.

As you might expect of a record named after the shape-shifting antics of flying starlings, Murmurations brings a change of direction for London production duo James Ford and Jas Shaw. This team-up with Hackney's The Deep Throat Choir wraps Simian Mobile Disco's precision-tooled electronica in a layer of translucent warmth, while Ford's work with Arctic Monkeys and Florence informs single Caught In A Wave's epic-pop dynamic. There's plenty to like here, not least the disco-punk chug of Hey Sister -Tom Tom Club as roughed up by DFA and A Perfect Swarm's slow-burn endorphin rush. But, too often, tracks such as We Go and Defender merely taxi along the dancefloor runway rather than take off and soar. ★★★ SIMON McEWEN

Listen To: A Perfect Storm | **Hey Sister**



SNOW PATROL

WILDNESS

POLYDOR OUT 25 MAY

Gary Lightbody's long journey out of the darkness.

A lot has happened to Gary Lightbody since his band Snow Patrol's last album in 2011, little of it good. He's struggled with alcohol, battled depression and watched his father succumb to dementia. All the resultant emotion has been poured into Wildness, a sparkling record whose polished exterior barely masks the turmoil at its heart. There's a tension behind Life On Earth as it shifts from haunting to dramatic, Lightbody seeking solace in childhood memories, while Heal Me throbs with a desperate euphoria. Just when it seems to be getting too much, Life And Death turns on a light. "Suddenly everything is alive," sings Lightbody. It's hard not to feel relieved for him. ★★★★ DAVE EVERLEY

Listen To: Life On Earth | Don't Give In | Life And Death

THE REAL ME

Arch singer-songwriter lets the irony slip, a bit, for his most personally revealing album yet.

FATHER JOHN MISTY **GOD'S FAVORITE CUSTOMER**

Tillman's fourth LP as Father

BELLAUNION.OUT 1 JUNE On the face of it, Josh

John Misty suggests a re-run of 2017's Pure Comedy, before the irony, mischief and state-of-the-nation addresses take a back seat, and he delivers what seems to be a bracing dose of intimacy and honesty. Of course, it could all be a knowing put-on. Tillman has said that God's Favorite Customer is a "heartache album", written when he was living in a hotel for two months as "my life blew up" - and the description rings true. A song baldly titled Please Don't Die wearily rages against "all these pointless benders with reptilian strangers"; a funereal piece titled The Palace is even more plain-spoken: "Last night I texted your iPhone/And said, 'I think I'm ready to come home/ I'm in over my head." The crestfallen title track, meanwhile, is essentially a hangover set to music, casting a red eye over drinking beyond 5am, spending the night "bug-eyed and babbling", and desperately looking for the next fake friend.

Wit and playfulness are inevitably also here, as evidenced by the titles of such songs as Date Night and Just Dumb Enough To Try, and the withering take on affairs of the heart they contain. It makes for stuff as compelling as his past music, though there's an occasional sense of the echoes of early-'70s singersongwriters starting to pall, and signs that Tillman may eventually have to find a new musical template.

On its own terms, though, this is a heady journey through excess, absurdity and 21st-century mores from arguably the world's most eloquent singer-songwriter, which seems to take us that bit closer to who he really is. ★★★ JOHN HARRIS

Listen To: God's Favorite Customer The Palace | Date Night



Q Review New Albums

BEN HOWARD NOONDAY DREAM

ISLAND, OUT 1 JUNE

Singer-songwriter shifts shapes once more.

When Ben Howard emerged out of the UK's acoustic folk scene in 2011, he offered a sound that was pretty but unremarkable. It was only with his second album, I Forget Where We Were, that we saw the breadth of his ambition and experimentation. Follow-up Noonday Dream is once again a different proposition: the emotionally wrought, highly charged grandeur of the last record has given way to something gentler - though no less intricate or unpredictable. There's a pastoral lilt to much of it - there in the sweet burble of Towing The Line and the shades of Nick Drake - while on What The Moon Does he hends more towards Arthur Russell. But Howard's evolving sound is fast becoming distinctively his own. ** LAURA BARTON

Listen To: Towing The Line | What The Moon Does | A Boat To An Island On The Wall





LOVELAWS

LOVELEAKS/CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL, OUT 18 MAY

Warpaint member strikes out alone.

It's impossible to fault Theresa Wayman's commitment to creating a mood of anaesthetised alienation on her solo debut under the name TT: Lovelaws unravels from a place of muted misery, where drowsy beats and abstracted vocals coalesce. Yet the span between dreary and dreamy isn't always that wide and Lovelaws can fall into the washed-out goth-pop gap between the two. There are moments that brilliantly showcase her way with an atmosphere - the clotted exotica of Safe, the bedroom-eyes smoulder of Tutorial, the industrial clank of The Dream - but Lovelaws feels like an act of introspection that's gone too far, one that might have benefitted from a breath of fresh air. a trip outside its head. ★★★ VICTORIA SEGAL

Listen To: Tutorial | The Dream



DEAFMAN GLANCE

DEAD OCEANS, OUT 18 MAY

Chicago alt-folk wunderkind weirds out.

In 2015 singer-songwriter Ryley Walker came into wider earshot with his second effort, Primrose Green. an album that echoed the tumultuous folk-rock of Tim Buckley's 1967's Goodbye And Hello. This fourth solo outing sees Walker, the virtuoso of quavering voice and dazzling acoustic-picking, supplanted by Walker, the questing artist in uneasy transition - he has talked of "crippling depression". Brooding and complex, Deafman Glance isn't easy to grasp, but repeated listens get you through the sophisticated structures to appreciate some mind-blowing moments (the sudden explosion of Can't Ask Why), out-there lyrics, and, on Telluride Speed, hard-won prettiness. ** ANDREW PERRY

Listen To: In Castle Dome Can't Ask Why | Telluride Speed



WARMDUSCHER WHALE CITY

LEAF OUT 1 JUNE

A side-project too far for Fat White Family's leader.

As any scrutiniser of post-addiction psychology will attest, Saul Adamczewski is currently supplanting hard drugs with a feverish work ethic. He's only just unveiled Insecure Men, there's a new Fat White Family album on its way and here he pops up again with Childhood's Ben Romans-Hopcraft - in Warmduscher. Also joined by members of scuzz-house unit Paranoid London, the newlyaliased "Saulcano" sadly neglected to enlist a plausible singer, as the yelpy, sub-Beasties rapping from Clams Baker renders Whale City all but unlistenable. A shame, because the backing tracks' raucous Fall-isms constitute a long-anticipated highenergy flipside to the smacky languor of Adamczewski's main band. ANDREW PERRY

Listen To: Big Wilma | Standing On The Corner



COSMIC WINK

MEXICAN SUMMER OUT 11 MAY

Texan falls in love, moves to LA and finds her own voice.

After two self-released albums, Texan singer-songwriter Jess Williamson's third effort finds her strumming a sound strongly reminiscent of fellow American girls-with-guitars Angel Olsen, Sharon van Etten and Haley Bonar. Crucially though, on Cosmic Wink, Williamson also manages to find her own voice, inspired by a move from Austin to LA as well as the giddy joy of new love ("Something in your eyes means I'm home when I'm homeless" she quivers on Love On The Piano). There are lyrics anyone who's been in a similar boat can relate to throughout, finding home amid poppy choruses and shimmering guitar lines. But it's when she slows down that Williamson really shines. There, her melodies hit you right in the heart. $\star\star\star$ HANNAH FLINT

Listen To: White Bird | Wild Rain



THRILLJOCKEY.OUT 25 MAY

West Coast psych-heads locate the sunshine vibe.

Over the last 15 years, San Francisco's Wooden Shjips have kept trying to tinker with their basic space-drone template. Their last album - 2013's Back To Land - added tentative balladry to their usual repetition and slightly misfired as a result. On V though - billed as their "summer album" - they choose to keep pushing in that direction, this time with surer results. The radiant seven-minute shimmer of Staring At The Sun sets the scene, echoing as it does the heat haze intensity of Spacemen 3. That sun-flecked sense of bliss is present throughout and halfway through they even drop in something approaching a conventional pop song with the cooling breeze of Already Gone. That lightness of touch is the real revelation here. ** JAMES OLDHAM

Listen To: Eclipse | Already Gone



O LAUGHING MATTER

Aussie singer swaps witty observations for oblique anguish and better songs.

COURTNEY BARNETT **TELL ME HOW YOU REALLY FEEL**

MARATHON ARTISTS OUT 18 MAY

When Courtney Barnett first ambled into view in 2013, the scrappy indie rock of her music tended to take a back seat to her lyrics. The Sydney-born singer has a gift for spinning the tiny, mundane details of her life into rambling, self-deprecating and frequently very funny stories.

On her second album, Barnett redresses that balance. For one, Tell Me How You Really Feel is notably short on laughs. Songs

about mowing the lawn or sitting in a doctor's waiting room have been replaced with something more opaque. The detritus of arguments and interpersonal problems floating to the surface rather than forming any coherent narratives. "I try my best to be patient, but I can only put up with so much shit," she rages amid sparks of TV-static distortion on I'm Not Your Mother, I'm Not Your Bitch.

Coming via Barnett's thick accent and deadpan delivery, such moments of turmoil still sound like receiving a long-

distance phone call from a mate, but it's now couched within a much stronger set of songs. Her debut album's primarycoloured backdrop having been swapped out for a richer, more nuanced palette.

Opener Hopefulessness has echoes of Nirvana's In Utero as its ominously twisting riff winds up into howls of feedback, and there are grunge-era parallels throughout in the guitars that crackle alongside her melodies. The Breeders' Deal sisters even pop up on backing vocals during the cheerily-titled

Crippling Self Doubt And General Lack Of Self Confidence, the track's bouncy fuzz-pop offsetting the nail-chewing anxieties within.

It's a clear sidestep away from Barnett's original M.O., but feels no less rewarding for it. **Not least on closer Sunday Roast** - a welcome breath of languid spaciousness and comforting choruses that offer a gentle resolve after all the jagged soul-baring. ★★★★ CHRIS CATCHPOLE

Listen To: Nameless, Faceless Hopefulessness | Sunday Roast

MUST BUYS The essential albums of the last few months



Jon Hopkins Singularity

The Surrey-born techno producer's

long-standing enchantment with nature, electricity and mindfulness glimmers anew on his second LP. Inspired by his experiences with meditation and trance states, its magic is to carve out a private space where only his listeners can bear witness.



Preachers Resistance Is Futile

OLUMBIA In putting their stark

introspection of recent years on hold, and instead shifting the spotlight into the minds of others (such as French artist Yves Klein), the Manics sound revitalised and liberated on their 13th album. It actually sounds like a singles collection of brand new material.



Novelist Guy MMMYEH Lewisham's Novelist is one of the key

new-gen MCs to spearhead grime's current resurgence. His hard-hitting, self-produced debut is both playful and political, showcasing both his lucid delivery and a predilection for hypnotic hooks. It's confirmation that this wave has a lot further to roll yet.



Goat Girl ROUGHTRADE

The debut album from - arguably the finest of the current crop of bands

hailing from South London is a belter. Nineteen songs marrying knuckly anger and gleeful swagger, bundled into just 40 glorious minutes, it's the sound of something fresh, witty and fantastically thrilling occurring.



DAWNING OF ANEWERA

Post-punks' seminal first three LPs revisited.

PINK FLAG ★★★★★ CHAIRS MISSING **** $154 \star \star \star \star \star$

PINK FLAG OUT 18 MAY

As he recalls in the sleevenotes that accompany these reissues, the writer Jon Savage first saw Wire in the spring of 1977, and wrote a review for the music

weekly Sounds. "They shortcircuit the audience totally, playing about 20 numbers, most around one minute long," he said. "The audience doesn't know when one has finished and another is beginning." Such was Wire's initial shock treatment, but what followed those first experimental bursts was the unfolding of a whole new musical world.

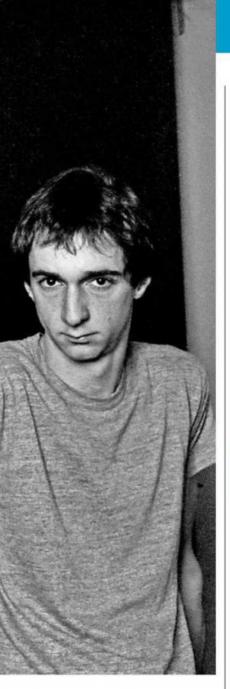


By the autumn of that year, punk's initial promise of a musical revolution had started to become swamped by the return of what Savage maligns as "four man rock'n'roll with all the old druggy arrogance and dull machismo", which made Wire's debut album Pink Flag all the more timely. In keeping with the band's art-school roots, its 21 tracks deconstructed the basic class-of-'76 ingredients of cranked-up guitars and short, sharp songwriting, to the point that songs such as Mr Suit and Straight Line almost sound like satires, while Reuters and the taut, inexplicably funny Three Girl Rhumba are effectively the

definitive first stirrings of what would come to be known as post-punk.

The follow-up, 1978's Chairs Missing, added more colours not least on Outdoor Miner. whose 105 glorious seconds (stretched on the single version to nearly three minutes) make up one of the most perfect manifestations of artful pop music ever recorded by anyone. On 154, released in 1979, the music became even more ambitious. The 15th is a lush, gleaming highpoint that suggests that Wire could have conceivably broken into the mainstream, though the cavernous sound and ornate words on A Touching **Display and The Other Window** are the work of prickly outsiders. The question of where they might have gone next hangs over all of its 13 tracks, but divergent ideas and personal tensions led





to 154 being Wire's last studio album until 1987.

All three albums are newly available in their original form, but new special editions available only on CD - come with voluminous collections of extra tracks. The Chairs Missing material is sometimes revelatory: among other highlights, an early try-out of I Am The Fly is more tentative and human than the finished version, sounding more like a sigh of muted despair than the shout of defiance it later became. Without the grandiosity of the finished album, demos of the songs from 154 sound much more like the music that preceded it, and thereby join the dots to an album that in its finished incarnation suggested a sudden jump into new territory.

What runs through everything is a sense of a group way ahead of its time, whose influence wove

itself into no end of music, from The Jam and Joy Division, to the more interesting aspects of the Britpop period. 154 was a big touchstone for Manic Street Preachers when they recorded The Holy Bible; circa 2004-5, bands such as Franz Ferdinand, **Bloc Party and The Futureheads** reawakened their influence proof that Wire were now as almost as central a part of the English rock canon as any number of bigger names.

The afterlife of this music, then, was huge and long-lasting, though if you properly immerse yourself in it, that thought might take second place to something every bit as important: the fact these are simply some of the most exciting, creative, fascinating albums you'll ever hear. JOHN HARRIS

Listen To: Three Girl Rhumba | Outdoor Miner | I Am The Fly | The 15th

TOTALLY WIRE-D Three LPs influenced by

their first three albums



The Jam Sound Affects POLYDOR, 1980 "I thought /Wire's 7 Dot

Dash and Ex-Lion Tamer were great: pop songs, but slightly jagged, and distorted," said Paul Weller. And here is the proof: The Jam's best album, smattered with subtle echoes of Wire's early work. ★★★★★



Manic Street Preachers The Holy Bible

James Dean

Bradfield considers Wire's 154 to be "the apex of their achievement", and its mixture of experimental designs, effects-laden guitars and grand ambitions can be heard clearly in the Manics' most vivid artistic statement.



Flastica Elastica DECEPTIVE, 1995 Pink Flag and **Chairs Missing**

were über-hip in mid-'90s London. Justine Frischmann's quartet made the point with Line Up, which took its lead from I Am The Fly, and Connection, whose intro effectively samples Three Girl Rhumba. ★★★★

ALSO OUT...



THE GUN CLUB **MOTHER JUNO**

COOKING VINIVI, OLIT 18 MAY

Jeffrey Lee Pierce's final masterpiece.

After yet another habitual collapse, Gun Club leader Jeffrey Lee Pierce reconstituted his garage-blues

combo in 1986 to include guitarist Kid Congo Powers and his squeeze Romi Mori on bass. The ensuing Mother Juno – recorded at Berlin's Hansa with Cocteau Twins' Robin Guthrie producing, who brought a shimmery beauty to The Breaking Hands and Yellow Eyes, while blunting none of Pierce's feral edge – is perhaps the cult outfit's finest moment. *** ** *ANDREW PERRY



MANSUN ATTACK OF THE GREY LANTERN

KSCOPE OUT 8 IUNE

Chester quartet's 1997 debut remastered.

Britpop was entering its burnout phase when Mansun added a twist with their 1997 debut. The quartet

balanced out daft song titles such as Egg Shaped Fred, Mansun's Only Love Song and The Chad Who Loved Me with musical finesse, their songs swooping from swaggering rock'n'roll to Bond theme-style orchestral epics, all with a sharp hook planted in the middle. This 21st-anniversary re-release sounds just as exhilarating, capturing an early flourish they could never repeat. ** * * NIALL DOHERTY



PINK FLOYD

Vinyl reboot of rock institution's entry-level primer. First released as a budget-price LP in 1971, Relics collates

the Syd Barrett-era hits, Arnold Layne and See Emily Play, with rarities and B-sides from Pink Floyd's late-'60s era. Reissued again in 1980, it introduced the band's new post-Wall fanbase to their bizarre, distant past. Stranger still, though, is how well this disparate collection of freakbeat pop (Interstellar Overdrive), spooky prog rock (Careful With That Axe, Eugene) and



BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

proto-heavy metal (The Nile Song) hangs together. ★★★ MARK BLAKE

THE ALBUM COLLECTION VOL 2, 1987-1996

COLUMBIA/LEGACY RECORDINGS, OUT 18 MAY

The Boss's late-'80s to mid-'90s CV revisited.

Springsteen's post-Born In The USA period is often cast as his most vague. This retrospective, covering five LPs -

from the toned-down divorce pop of Tunnel Of Love to the spare, modern Steinbeckery of The Ghost Of Tom Joad (plus assorted rarities and delights) draws new focus. Modest and muted they may be, but after the mid-'80s bombast, what comes through is the nuance and intimacy of the songs, documenting a period of Springsteen's life that brought great disappointment and new happiness, and with them a new gift for introspection. **** * LAURA BARTON



VARIOUS ARTISTS **BOB STANLEY & PETE WIGGS PRESENT:** PARIS IN THE SPRING

More than Serge: collection of post-'68 grooviness. Following compilations themed around New York picnics

and the English weather, Saint Etienne's Bob Stanley and Pete Wiggs dig into their crates to map the cultural shifts that occurred in French music after the Paris, May 1968 uprisings. It's all very cool, of course. Breathy, orchestral pop, louche-ly funky Hammond grooves and some impressive proto-electronica coalescing under a plume of Gitanes smoke and existentialism. Plus, it's worth picking up just for Stanley's astonishingly detailed sleevenotes. Fascinating, if perhaps not essential. ★★★ CHRIS CATCHPOLE







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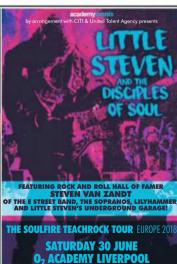
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LETTER OF THE MONTH

STREET FIGHTING MAN

Dear Q, as a Manics fan for 30 years, I was really worried to read Nicky Wire's comments in your recent excellent cover interview. Despite his usual quips about the likes of Billy Bragg, Donald Trump and OBE-accepting rock stars, it was his crushed demeanour and disillusionment with the world around him that I found most perturbing. Surely this doesn't spell the end of the Manics, especially considering how good new LP Resistance Is Futile is? In fact, Wire's "torrent of anxiety" seems to have fed into his lyrics to help make their best record this century. So, if you're reading this, Nicky, *please* don't swap the bass for the paint brush à la The Clash's Paul Simonon. Your country needs you! Plus, have you seen Simonon's "art"?! *Steve Moorfield, via Q Mail*





ACID REIGN

Dear Q, ah, the smell of vapour rub in the morning... Thanks so much for your recent Acid House celebration, it brought back so many good memories for an old raver like myself. I was a regular at the Haçienda's Nude night back in the day and remember how the place went almost overnight from being virtually empty, apart from a few miserable-looking students in grey raincoats who were "too cool" to dance, to a full-on Day-Glo rave-up where loved-up hooligans in dungarees would hug each other. There hasn't been a youth culture revolution since, and I feel privileged to have experienced it. Good times. Pete Ashton, Stockport

Q385 SPINE MESSAGE

"1881" is the year that Pablo Picasso was born. Picasso's 1937 painting Guernica inspired the Manic Street Preachers song My Guernica, from their 2001 album Know Your Enemy. Could be a coincidence, but thought I'd give it a go...

Stephen Smith, via Q Mail

Good try, Stephen, but that's incorrect. Here's the right answer...

Dear Q, I've been buying Q for over 20 years now and I think I may have got the spine message for the first time! "1881" on the spine of Q385 refers to a Franz Von Stillfried-Ratenicz

The World of Q

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Paul Ward, Peru



Rob Hickin, whale spotting, San Ignacio Lagoon, Baja, Mexico



Ryan Gouldsbrough, Cell 1, Alcatraz prison, San Francisco

Caption Competition

WIN! A PAIR OF VIP TICKETS TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT FESTIVAL 2018



has teamed up with the generous folk at The Isle Of Wight Festival 2018, which takes

place 21-24 June at Seaclose Park, Newport, to offer one reader the chance to win a pair of VIP tickets. This year's event boasts a stellar line-up which includes headliners The Killers, Kasabian and Liam Gallagher.

Also on the bill are Nile Rodgers & Chic, Rita Ora, James Bay, Blossoms, Manic Street Preachers and Camila Cabello, who will be appearing across the weekend of live music which also includes acoustic sets, DJ performances and emerging talent. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the festival, so in honour of the event's Golden Jubilee, all attendees are invited

on Saturday, 23 June to adorn themselves in gold for a weekend of fun and celebration. All the biggest names in music, one unmissable weekend. Go to www.isleofwightfestival.com





Terms and Conditions: The prize package consists of two VIP tickets (Entrants must be 18 and over, and guest 12 and over), camping tickets to the Isle Of Wight Festival 2018 (Thursday, 21 June - Sunday, 24 June 2018). The prize does not $include\ travel\ or\ accommodation\ for\ the\ winner, or\ their guest.\ The\ tickets\ are\ issued\ subject\ to\ the\ Isle\ Of\ Wight\ Festivals\ standard\ T&C's\ (see\ https://isleofwightfestival.com/assets/images/gallery/IOW-Festival-TCs-2018.pdf).$ The prize is non-transferable, non-refundable and non-negotiable. There is no cash alternative.

> THIS MONTH'S CAPTION **CHALLENGE**

Here's a picture of U2 shovelling snow. Send your caption entry (one per person, and the funnier the better) including your address, to captioncomp@ Qthemusic.com or on a postcard to the Q address above left. See below for Terms & Conditions. Competition closes: 25 May 2018.





A Q384 WINNING CAPTIONS

"Ronnie Wood refuses to kick the bucket."

Samantha Pearson, Hartlepool Congratulations to Samantha, who wins a Supro electric guitar and amp, worth £1600.

Q within 14 days or another winner may be chosen. Q will not respond to questions about its chosen winners but will provide winners' names and the home towns, provided a request is made to the usual Q address and accompanied with a SAE. One entry per person and you must be over 18 and live in the UK. Prize is non-negotiable with no cash alternative. Personal data will be collected by Q and passed to prize provider to process entries. See http://www.bauerdatapromise. $co.uk for more details. Full T\&Cs apply, see \ http://www.bauerlegal.co.uk/competition-terms.html. Any queries, email: QMail@Qthemusic.co.uk/competition-terms.html. Any queries, email: QMail@Qthemusic.co.uk/c$

photograph called "Samurai Warrior 1881" which adorns the cover of the Manics' brilliant new album, Resistance Is Futile. Am I right? And do I win a prize?!

Dave Johnson, Sheffield

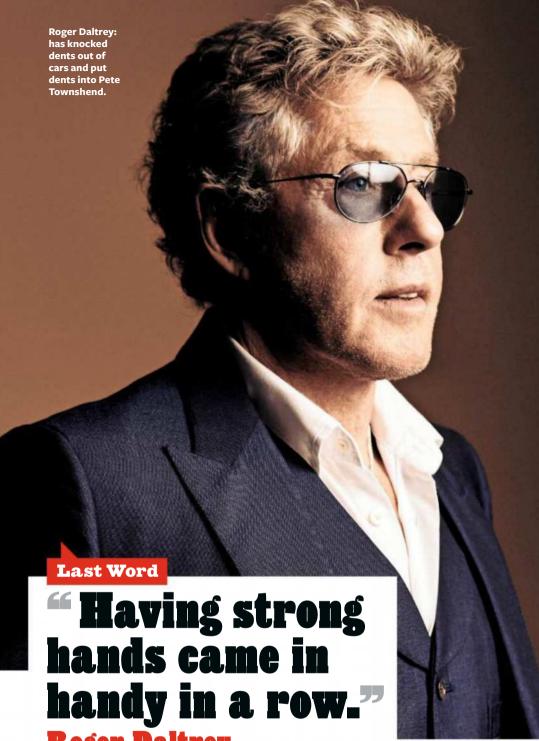
Correct, Dave, but no prize, just a deep sense of self-satisfaction.

GIRL **POWER**

Dear Q, recently my good friend Hanna asked me what I'd like for my birthday and I said the new Girl Ray album, having just finished reading your great feature about the North London trio in the latest issue. So I was surprised to see on opening my present on my birthday that she'd mistakenly got

> Double album joy: Girl Ray (above left) and Goat Girl (left).

me the new record by South London quartet Goat Girl instead. Anyway, it didn't matter in the end because she then went out and bought me the Girl Ray record too. So now I'm doubly made-up two brilliant albums for the price of one! So, thank you Q and Hanna for being my friends. Jill Crowthers, via Q Mail



Roger Daltrey

The Who frontman is more likely to be cursing at the TV than appearing on it.



hat was the last album you bought? When we started out. The Who were

always covering different stuff from everybody else. I used to go out every day and search out strange, unheard of albums with tracks that we could do. We used to try and do a new song every week. But I haven't paid for an

album for 50 years. Bollocks to that, everybody steals our music so I'm going to steal everybody else's!

When was the last time you swore at the television?

Every night. It's much better than swearing at the missus. It's just the shallowness of some of the stuff they put on. What a load of bollocks. The last thing I had a really good swear at was that new Agatha Christie thing

/Ordeal By Innocence / that's on TV. It's so fucking bad, it's unbelievable. I just think, "What a load of old tosh." And you have to wait a week between episodes, I think, "Fuck me, I'm losing the will to live."

When were you last offered an acting role?

I get approached all the time but I don't want to do it any more. It became unenjoyable. The last bit of acting I did was on CSI. I did a lot of work. When I look back. the one that was the most fun was the character I played in Highlander: The Series. I used

to send it up terrible because I couldn't take that shit seriously. I mean, come on!

When did you last cook breakfast for someone?

A couple of months ago. It was a Welsh rarebit. Do I have a culinary speciality? Yeah, cornflakes. I'm not a chef by any means but I can get away with it. My wife broke her wrist last year and couldn't cook for six weeks so I had to do it and we survived. That's all I can say, we survived.

When was the last time you watched Arsenal?

I watch every game on TV. I love football and I like to watch all the teams. I like to see how good they are and weigh up the opposition. I don't like going to the Emirates, something happened when Highbury closed for me. They split us season ticket holders up. It was people I'd been sitting with for 20 odd years, you knew everyone and you'd get the banter going. When I went to the Emirates the first few times I found it cold. It was like going to work for me. We played those kinds of places our whole fucking lives.

When was the last time you used your skills as a sheet metal worker?

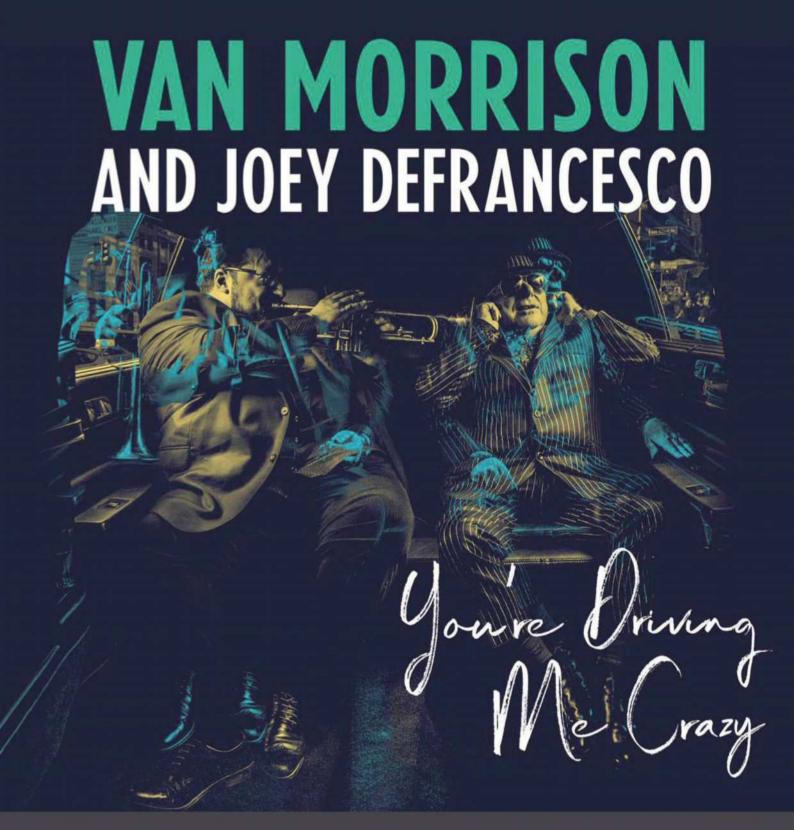
I do some bits and pieces on the farm, I might do a bit of welding. That's all the easy stuff, it's not really sheet metal work. I haven't done that since I left the factory. I knocked a few dents out of the car but that's about it. Having strong hands from it came in handy sometimes in a row.

When was the last time you got into a physical fight?

Oh God, I can't remember. A long, long time ago. It was probably when we were doing Quadrophenia when I hit Pete. Way back in the '70s when we made the album. He made the mistake of hitting me with a guitar, I didn't like it. It doesn't matter what the argument was over. It's old hat, you don't need to go there!

What is the last thing you'd do if the world was ending?

I'd make sure I had all my family there and I'd just hug them and tell them I love 'em. Then I'd say, "Let's head for the entrance."



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